

Built For Families

ChristianaCare's groundbreaking new Center for Women's & Children's Health is an investment in the health, well-being and future of our community **BY JANICE NEVIN, M.D., MPH**

IN RECENT MONTHS we've all felt the change to our daily lives. Many of you may be dealing with feelings of uncertainty as the coronavirus pandemic has affected us in ways we could not have imagined.

In times like this, we want to stay firmly connected to our community and continue to move forward with our commitment to providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time, for everyone we serve.

"For the Love of Health" is our mantra at ChristianaCare. We have transformed from a health system into a system that is impacting the health of all Delawareans.

Even today, as we provide care and help to protect our community from coronavirus, our caregivers are supporting new moms during the experience of childbirth and welcoming a new baby into the family.

We believe the first step to being a healthy adult is being a healthy child. That is why we believe in taking a life-course approach to health, starting right at birth.

It is for all of these reasons that I am so pleased and proud to share with the Chamber community that ChristianaCare will open its brand-new Center for Women's & Children's Health later this spring. The new Center is an eight-story, 400,000+ square-foot tower that will support and enhance the most up-to-date, evidence-based model of care, with improved integration of services and the space to offer innovative and transformative patient-centered care for mothers, babies and families.

The Center will feature:

- A state-of-the-art NICU—one of the most advanced in the nation—featuring private rooms with sleep-in space for families.
- New and expanded labor and delivery suites.
- Private rooms for mothers and families after delivery.
- Expanded triage area and new labor lounge.
- Separate admitting and discharge areas for the convenience of our patients.
- A continuing care nursery for babies with needs including newborn jaundice, feeding challenges and those born exposed to opioid drugs during pregnancy.

As an employer committed to high-value women's and children's health care, ChristianaCare represents the gold standard in mom-, baby-, and family-friendly policies, practices and programming. Our investment in the Center will enhance our ability to provide expert care to women and their families across the state and will be a beacon to attract and retain workers across the business spectrum.



A guiding philosophy during the five years that went into the design of the Center was to keep mothers and babies together and to support families as a whole. There was a deliberate focus on the changing needs of women across generations and how to engage women before, during and after they walk through the doors. That thinking is clearly echoed in both the architecture and the care that will be provided at the Center.

Currently, ChristianaCare delivers more than 6,000 babies each year—making us a leading provider of maternity care in the region. We have the only high-risk delivering hospital in Delaware offering Level III neonatal intensive care. The new Center will support ChristianaCare's focus on reducing infant mortality, neonatal abstinence syndrome, maternal mortality and post-partum depression.

The Center will support the health of the community by providing state-of-the-art, high-quality comprehensive specialty care for women and children across the lifespan and critical care to infants. With the opening of this new building, ChristianaCare will be the only health system in the region with couplet care in the NICU, keeping moms and babies together. The other parent or partner can even stay the night.

ChristianaCare recognized that the NICU is a very challenging environment during the first hours and days of starting a family. Letting a mother be right next to her child, even in the most difficult of circumstances, is a unique and meaningful opportunity to foster bonding. This is predicated on a European model that demonstrated that mothers are more likely to breastfeed in this environment, which is particularly important in the early development of children.

The building will also feature private rooms for mothers, babies and families after birth, an expanded continuing care nursery for babies with special needs; a tranquil family rooftop garden; vibrant, sibling play spaces with interactive displays and artwork; and open community spaces for health education and programs.

All of us want the very best for the newest members of our community and for their families. This new Center will bring the full range of

ChristianaCare's expertise to women, babies and children and is a life-long commitment to the healthy future of our community and our state. ■



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