

New NLV hospital begins to take shape

Architectural design for the new Meadows Hospital Medical Center in North Las Vegas is near completion.

The hospital, which will be located on 14 acres of a 40-acre parcel on the northwest corner of Tropical Parkway and Losee Road in North Las Vegas, will have 120 beds and will be designed to expand to 208 beds in the future. The facility will employ 500 people and house 115,000 square feet of medical office buildings.

The hospital, which will cost about \$100 million to complete, will bring service to an under-served and growing area, especially as the expansion of the I-215 beltway continues just north of the site, said Mike Walsh, the hospital's future chief operating officer.

Meadows will also serve the medical needs of the currently undeveloped 1,900-acre region a few miles west that will eventually hold another 6,000 homes.

The hospital's development team, Tropical & Losee LLC, includes veterinarian David Crowe and real estate developers John McDonald and Fletcher Majors. The group plans to break ground on the project in the first quarter of 2003.

Given the current health-care climate, Walsh said he is confident the medical malpractice issue will be resolved in time for his hospital to escape the effects of staffing issues. There is a greater concern in staffing nurses, he said, a difficulty for medical facilities and hospitals around the nation.

"We're not concerned about medical malpractice, but I'm curious about how to fill the nursing spots," he said.

Walsh and Terry Allen, who will be the hospital's head of business development, have also been meeting with local physicians to get input on what kinds of new technology may be needed in the hospital.

"We're taking a real hands on approach with this," said Walsh, who most recently worked as the chief operating officer at Summerlin Hospital, and has worked in the health-care industry for 32 years.

In other health-care news ...

Last year University Medical Center

(UMC) treated 546 patients with head injuries. The average cost to treat a head injury is \$8,000 per day, according to the hospital. The cost of traumatic brain injury in America is \$48.3 billion annually. Hospital bills account for about two-thirds of that amount.

So this year, UMC decided to make head-injury prevention a priority. In an effort to reduce the number of sports-related head injuries, the UMC Trauma Center received a grant from the Nevada Office of Safety. The grant will enable UMC to purchase 250 helmets, which will be distributed at different child safety events during the summer.

The helmets are designed for bike riding, skateboarding, in-line skating and other sports activities. The first event where UMC gave out the helmets was held on June 15 at Craig Quick Care, 2202 W. Craig Rd., an event that is a part of the Children's Safe Summer Campaign, which takes place at several other Craig Quick Care locations around the valley throughout the summer.

Elsewhere ...

The University of Nevada School of Medicine recently selected The Doctors Company to be its medical liability insurance carrier. The acceptance of the insurance plan allows one area of the state's health care system to breathe a small sigh of relief given the current malpractice crisis.

The school will pay \$2 million per year, instead of the \$1.2 million it paid last year and referred to the increase as "modest compared to the 200 percent to 400 percent increases being experienced by some physicians and medical schools across the nation," according to a statement from the school.

The school will not have to absorb the added cost all by itself. Partner hospitals will pick up a portion of the extra cost and the Nevada State Board of Examiners is recommending \$388,600 be funded from the state estate tax.

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