

## **BIRTH OF A NOTION | IN WITH THE NEW**

### **Prentice Greatly Expands Women's Services But Isn't Ready To Throw Babies Out With Bathwater**

The welcome mat is out for women of all ages at the new Prentice Hospital, which opens for business on Saturday at 250 E. Superior, on the campus of Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

"The whole concept is that there are fundamental differences between men and women that need to be seriously taken into account both in health and in sickness," says Dr. Sherman Elias, chief of obstetrics and gynecology for NMH.



**Jodi Trotter, nurse-manager of the neonatal department at Prentice Women's Hospital, describes care for the tiniest infants.**

Where the "old" Prentice, housed since 1975 in a Bertrand Goldberg design at 333 E. Superior, established a formidable franchise in childbirth – 10,535 deliveries last year, tops in the Midwest – the "new" Prentice is looking to expand that franchise into a comprehensive approach to women's health.

More than a decade after the first clinical studies were published that took into account women's distinctive physiological makeup, Prentice is seeking to bring the medicine that pertains to that makeup under one roof, from the labor-triage area on the first floor, to the center for women's cardiovascular health, to the top floors, where women with gynecological cancers will be cared for.

"NMH already treats more women with breast and gynecologic cancers than any other Chicago area hospital," says Dr. Julian Schink, chief of gynecological oncology. But Schink wants the 93 percent of Chicago area women who still don't come to NMH for those conditions to take a look at the new Prentice.

If women like Prentice's sleek lines, cute shops and private rooms with 42-inch interactive flat-screen TVs, that's good for the hospital, yes, but it's good for them, too, Schink says.

With advanced ovarian cancers, for example, women who seek treatment at "expert centers" like NMH, with state-of-the-art technology and surgeons who do many gynecological surgeries, are more likely to have better outcomes than women who seek treatment at facilities that do not have specialized technology and personnel. Those improved outcomes can be "measured in years" of survival – more than three years in some studies, Schink says.

With the new Prentice, "We want to say, 'This is the place to come.' It's critical that it isn't viewed as a baby factory, or only as a baby factory. We are absolutely committed to caring for women throughout their lives," Schink says.

Babies are still a very big deal, though. The new Prentice is on track to become one of the top five birthing centers in the United States.

"The reproductive years are a core every woman has as part of her gender," says Jean Przybylek, vice president of women's health and operations for NMH.

While Przybylek would like to see women saunter into Prentice for the first time for an educational series on women's health, or even for breakfast in one of its restaurants, many women will likely find the new Prentice as they found the

#### **Product Note**



**42-inch LCD televisions with TigrNet interactive system, as installed by TeleHealth Services at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.**

old one, when they're looking for a place to deliver their babies.

Prentice will remain "a family-oriented center for the birth experience," Elias says, with private rooms and places for family members to stay overnight.

But the obstetrical technology is cutting-edge as well, in terms of fetal monitoring, sonography, now with three and even four dimensions, and medical records, plus speedy wireless communication.

"I think there are going to be big advances in our ability to detect birth defects," with DNA technology and electronics, Elias says. The improved NICU will contribute to increased "survival and well being of babies born prematurely." And, he says, "a focus on safety issues in labor and

delivery will improve outcomes for mother and baby" in obstetrical emergencies.

Prentice will give researchers an opportunity to build on the discoveries made there and at other research centers that have contributed to what Prentice is able to offer.

"Even in the 1970s and '80s, [research was] done in men because they were easy to study; they didn't have hormonal shifts," says Przybylek. Results from those studies were extrapolated to women, but researchers and women alike could see that women's heart disease, cancers, pain levels and other manifestations were different from those of men.

Studies addressing female physiology have increased in the last 10 years, and will be ongoing for at least another decade, says Przybylek.

## SOME MOMS TO BE PACKED UP AND MOVED

Bright and early on Saturday morning, the new Prentice Women's Hospital will quietly take over from the old building down the street. The 250 or so women and babies who find themselves in the round cement tower will be packed up and moved, beginning with the neonatal intensive-care unit, which houses the most vulnerable babies.

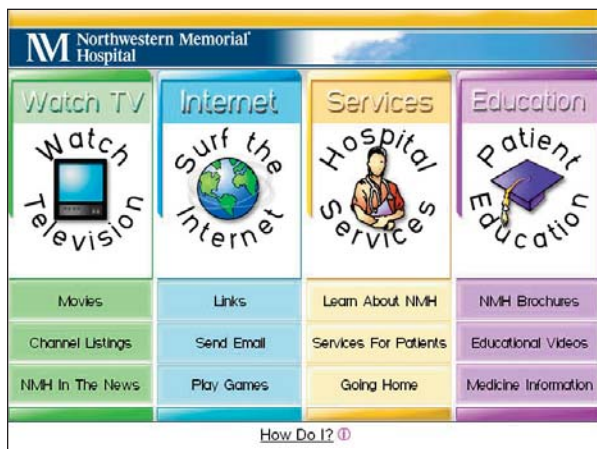
"We can't open our obstetrics operation without the NICU," says Jean Przybylek, vice president for women's health and operations at Prentice. If a baby needs live-saving help, it has to be available.

The patients will travel internally, just a bit of a blip on top of the 1,000 or so people that the "patient escort" department moves every day over the bridges and through the tunnels that connect the buildings on the Streeterville campus of Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Once the NICU is settled into its sumptuous new quarters, with 86 bassinets, compared with 47 in the old building, then the obstetrical department will begin moving, followed by gynecology departments from the old building, and from other places on the campus.

The Prentice people staged a mock move with 34 "patients" representing everyone from the sickest to the "most well," so they have a good idea how the move will go, Przybylek says.

At the end of the day on Saturday, "all move-related activities should be [wrapped up]," she says.



**A 42-inch flat-screen TV with multiple functions is in every patient room in Prentice Women's Hospital.**