

advanced care for mothers and babies

Welcoming new life requires specialized expertise



For more than six decades, celebrities and not-so-famous people alike have come to Saint John's because the Health Center makes childbirth a special experience for all women.

That legacy continues with the opening of 12 birthing suites in Southern California's newest Women's Unit—the McAlister Women's Health Center. Located on the third floor of the Howard Keck Center, the unit is designed to allow women to have an at-home birthing experience while ensuring access to academic-level medical expertise.

The private suites are beautifully appointed with wood-tone cabinetry, soothing wall coloring, a 42-inch television and wireless Internet connectivity. Each room also features a large window that fills the space with natural light as well as a daybed so that fathers or birthing coaches can stay overnight.

"What really differentiates Saint John's is the renowned, clinically advanced staff of obstetricians, perinatologists, neonatologists, pediatricians and nurses, as well as the nurturing attention we provide to women and their families," said Irena Zuanic, Director of Women's Health Services. "Our physicians and nurses are

continually learning and researching new techniques and best practices—all in an effort to bring the best care to women and their babies."

This high level of expertise can also be found in the Saint John's Irene Dunne Guild Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Should a newborn require extra medical attention, the Level II NICU offers clinically advanced care by renowned specialists in a warm, supportive environment. Equipped with the latest technology, the Saint John's NICU provides babies with around-the-clock, special-needs care from experienced neonatologists and pediatric respiratory therapists and nurses.

"Our staff intimately shares the families' concerns and is dedicated to improving each baby's status from surviving to thriving," said Zuanic. "We have expanded to a 12-bed NICU additional capacity and further extended our special caring to the community."

The McAlister Women's Health Center also houses two operating rooms adjacent to the birthing suites and the Maria Shriver Nursery. ■

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simultaneous surgeries

WHILE A BABY UNDERWENT SCHEDULED SURGERY, HER MOTHER UNEXPECTEDLY FOUND HERSELF ON AN OPERATING TABLE

It was a day that Gabriel and Michelle Morales had been eagerly anticipating. Their 4-month-old daughter, Chelsea, who had been born with a cleft lip and palate, was scheduled for surgery with Chip Miller, MD, and Janet Salomonson, MD, Director of the Cleft Palate Center, to correct her lip. "The night before, I had been shaking and in a lot of pain, but I was determined to keep Chelsea's appointment," Michelle recalled.

But the next day, before she could get to the elevator that would take her up to the preoperative department, Morales fainted and found herself being wheeled rather than walking into the preoperative waiting room. Noticing that Morales was in severe abdominal pain, Jean Burgdorf, RN, immediately sent her down to the Emergency Department. Gabriel stayed with his daughter Chelsea while Dr. Miller began the first part of the baby's surgery.

As soon as Dr. Miller had finished his surgery on Chelsea, he went down to the Emergency Department to check on her mother. A quick diagnosis by the emergency staff revealed that Morales, who had lost a lot of blood, had a ruptured ectopic

pregnancy, a condition that is one of the leading causes of maternal death. Called in to perform emergency surgery, fertility specialist Hal Danzer, MD, gave Morales two units of blood and was able to quickly remedy her condition with minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery. Just as Morales was about to be given anesthesia, Dr. Salomonson let her know that Chelsea's surgery had been successful.

The baby came into recovery just 30 minutes before Morales did, and Ann Masson, RN, Coordinator of the Cleft Palate Center, arranged adjoining postoperative rooms. Wheeling Morales to her room, the transportation team paused by the baby's room so Morales could see Chelsea's new face. Mother and daughter were both discharged the next day.

"There were so many steps along the way, and each was done so perfectly," said Dr. Salomonson. Morales agrees wholeheartedly. "People at Saint John's really care about their patients. I appreciate everything they did to help Chelsea and me," she said. "On a scale of 1 to 10, I rate Saint John's a 10 plus."