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St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City to open two new 'healthplexes'

The facilities feature the state's first free-standing emergency rooms.

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St. Anthony Hospital's new campuses in Midwest City and southwest Oklahoma City will start receiving patients this week and next.

St. Anthony Healthplex East at Interstate 40 and Douglas Boulevard opens Friday, and St. Anthony Healthplex South at Interstate 44 and SW 134 Street will open Tuesday.

The identical 52,000-square-foot, three-story centers feature the state's first licensed, free-standing emergency rooms, officials say. Each ground floor includes the ER and a full-service laboratory with a pneumatic tube delivery system, and a separate entrance to diagnostic imaging, sleep and breast centers.

Six respective primary-care physicians will occupy the second floors, starting Monday in Midwest City and Jan. 23 in southwest Oklahoma City. And beginning Feb. 1, specialists such as nephrologists, ear-nose-throat surgeons, orthopedic surgeons and cardiologists will take the third floors.

"We wanted to bring our outpatient services to our east and south markets of Oklahoma County, so our patients wouldn't have to make the drive (to the hospital's main MidTown campus)," St. Anthony President Joe Hodges said on a tour of the east campus Friday.

Officials expect the east healthplex to draw patients from Midwest City, Harrah, Jones and Choctaw, and south healthplex to draw from Newcastle, Tuttle and Blanchard.

"Both facilities combine our best ideas and practices for patient satisfaction, physician satisfaction and ease of access," Hodges said.

Each campus brings from 65 to 70 new jobs, Hodges said. About 55 employees started in early December at each site, he said. Including benefits, annual salaries for the jobs — which range from housekeepers, nurses and respiratory therapists to lab and radiology technicians — average \$77,000, Hodges said.

St. Anthony worked with developers Darin Miller and David Neff on the new locations, which were designed by Miller Architects Inc. and constructed simultaneously over the past 14 months by Flintco.

The cost of both projects is \$44 million, officials said. Miller and Neff will lease the new facilities to St. Anthony, which invested an additional \$4.5 million for equipment including two \$700,000 64-slice computerized tomography "CT" X-ray scanners.

For the buildings' exteriors, architect Darin Miller incorporated expansive windows that act as natural skylights. "Patients really love it, so they don't feel so enclosed," Hodges said.

Other patient-focused details including floral carpeting, fabric-covered window seats and satin-like wall coverings that offer the quiet, soothing feeling of a hotel or spa, rather than a clinical setting, Miller said. Nearly every room features a flat-screen television.

Medical treatment at either emergency room will be indistinguishable from treatment at the St. Anthony Hospital ER in MidTown, said Chad Borin, director of emergency medical services. Shifts, he said, will be staffed by three registered nurses, a respiratory therapist and one board-certified ER physician.

Each ER, Borin said, includes 12 examination rooms, including two triage rooms, a trauma room and a room with videoconferencing equipment to enable off-site psychiatrists to make behavioral medicine diagnoses. Patients requiring admission to the hospital will be transferred directly to a room at St. Anthony's main MidTown hospital or another hospital of their choice, he said.

St. Anthony Vice President Kyle Nondorf said the hospital modeled its new emergency

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rooms after St. Mary's Sun Prairie Emergency Center, a sister SSM Health Care facility in Madison, Wis., and another ER in Raleigh, N.C. Similar facilities exist in 22 states, Nondorf said.

Industry studies, Nondorf said, show visits to free-standing ERs average 90 minutes, compared with up to four hours at traditional hospital-based ones, he said.

Hospital spokeswoman Sandra Payne said patients can go online to schedule appointments at either new ER for non-life-threatening conditions. Since St. Anthony introduced its "In Quicker" service in May 2010, 3,000 patients have taken advantage of it for appointments at the main campus, Payne said.



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