

The Journal

City Hospital showcases expansion, renovation

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By Samantha Cronk – Journal staff writer, journal-news.net

MARTINSBURG - City Hospital hosted an open house to showcase its new emergency department expansion and renovations as well as new technologies designed to provide a more efficient patient and staff experience.

The expansions and renovations made up two phases of the \$11.2 million project for the hospital, which is part of West Virginia University Hospitals-East. Phase I was a 17,000-square-foot expansion that began in May 2010 and was completed in April. Phase II was the renovation of existing space, which will be open in November.

Dr. Daryl LaRusso, medical director of the Emergency Department, said the expansions and renovations have added more efficient technologies and an improved facility for patient care.

"It's a nice new rhythm," LaRusso said.

Nurse Manager Amy Culler said the Emergency Department expanded from 18 beds, including hallway beds, to 40. The rooms are all private rooms, which she said creates a more comfortable atmosphere for the patients.

"I think the patients are happier with the private-room concept. There are no longer the curtains in between their beds," Culler said.

Each room contains a bedside computer, making it easier for doctors to communicate with their patients face to face, while still using the computer to send necessary information about patient care and medications to nurses.

"There's efficiency where I'm still talking to (the patient) but I'm still working and having communications with the nurse," LaRusso said.

Additionally, a CenTrak tracking system has been added so staff and patients can be located and viewed on a tracking board. The tracking system is attached to staff and patient badges.

The CenTrak system also contains a time stamp so staff can see how long the patients are waiting or when they are being treated to streamline the process as much as possible.

While many of the changes were an improvement to patient care, the staff and administration also had to contend with changes and challenges with the new technologies, such as now using the computer for patient charts and care.

"Going from paper to electronic medical records is a huge cultural change," LaRusso pointed out.

"It will take three to six months before we get settled down, so we haven't fully taken advantage of all the efficiencies yet."

The Emergency Department extension is divided into three pods, which have been nicknamed the white pod, the blue pod and the gold pod in honor of West Virginia University's colors

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