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NEW FORENSIC UNIT AT STATE HOSPITAL READY FOR PATIENTS

The Arizona Department of Health Services proudly opens the doors on a new 120-bed forensic facility at the State Hospital today. The project was budgeted before the recession and finished on time with a design that fosters an atmosphere of recovery for the patients while protecting the community.

“Opening this facility marks the end of a long effort. Twelve years ago, the Auditor General recommended we rebuild the entire hospital. The forensic hospital is the final piece,” said Will Humble, ADHS Director. “The forensic patients will be moving from facilities built in the early ‘50s into space specifically designed for better treatment and safety for all.”

The forensic units house persons who are sent to the state hospital from the court system, either to be Restored To Competency (RTC) or having been judged Guilty Except Insane (GEI). Therefore, the buildings have state of the art security to protect patients, staff and visitors. The hospital is also a treatment facility, so the new unit allows for diverse treatment options and unique opportunities for treatment.

The new facilities were designed with green standards and are on track to earn a Silver LEED Certificate. The LEED rating system measures the use of strategies for better sustainability and a healthier environment for occupants. The evaluation looks at everything from the design of the building (to reduce the energy and impact on resources) through using environmentally friendly processes through construction.

Staff will begin moving patients into the new units in November.

NEW	OLD
Rooms for one or two patients	Dorm rooms that housed up to a dozen
Private Bathrooms	Dorm-style bath and shower facilities
Staff ability to view units	Obstructed views from security to units
Open design for security and treatment	Long hallways that made security difficult
Secure design limits hiding places for contraband	Searches required to check ceiling tiles and wall for contraband
Green design to reduce water and energy use	Expensive repairs needed for plumbing and building



Arizona State Hospital CEO Cory Nelson cuts the ribbon to open the new Forensic Hospital, along with Chief Medical Director and Deputy Director of Behavioral Health Services Laura Nelson, M.D., former ADHS Director Susan Gerard, and current ADHS Director Will Humble.



More than 200 people attended the ceremony on October 5, 2011



An aerial view of the new Forensic Hospital.



This courtyard is an open space for patients to enjoy. Security is maintained, because the courtyard is surrounded by buildings.