

IU Hospital opens new high-risk maternity unit Unique partnership with Riley NICU benefits patients

On a mid-October day in 1974, snow began to fall around Indianapolis, disrupting traffic and causing numerous delays. Among those delayed was mother-to-be Chicquita Chissell's obstetrician, leaving delivery of Chissell's child in the hands of an Indiana University Hospital resident. Within 20 minutes of her arrival at the hospital, Chissell gave birth to her daughter, Chantel – the first baby born at the new hospital.

To commemorate the occasion, the resident gave Chissella Canadian dollar bill, a memento she has held on to throughout the years. Admittedly, that resident, Alan Golichowski, MD – now chief of Maternal Fetal Medicine at IU Hospital – doesn't recall why he had the Canadian bill with him at the time, but he says it did signify that the new labor and delivery unit was “open for business.”

On February 1, the unit held an open house to celebrate its new home, which places special emphasis on high-risk pregnancies. The new OBICU (Obstetrics Intensive Care Unit) works closely with Riley Hospital's top-rated NICU. Together, they provide Indiana's leading integrated perinatal and neonatal care and services.

“What we offer expecting families is one-stop thinking,” says Golichowski, who is also William H. and Sallie E. Coleman Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, IU School of Medicine. “Mothers with a high-risk pregnancy frequently give birth to children who require intensive care. Because of our unique relationship with Riley, we are well suited to provide top quality, family-focused intensive care.”

As the nature of delivery has evolved through the years, all phases of birthing can be accommodated in one room. The new and improved OBICU features 10 private rooms designed for birthing and three operating rooms for deliveries requiring a C-section. The new unit design also includes a family lounge and a comfortable place to relax.

“The entire unit was designed to accommodate patients and families who are expected to be here for a while,” says Golichowski.

The new unit “has been many years in the making,” Martha Allen, director of Women's Services for Clarian Health, said at the February 1 open house. “We all kind of birthed this unit together.”

— RYAN PUCKETT, STAFF WRITER of *The Clarian*

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What's next?

In 2009, Riley Hospital will open Phase V, a 10-story patient tower that will expand pediatric critical care, the neonatal intensive care units and operating rooms. Phase V plans also include the integration of the high-risk maternal/fetal center, further cementing the partnership between IU and Riley hospitals.

“Our future plans at Phase V represent a progressive strategy for mothers and families preparing for a high-risk pregnancy,” says James Lemons, MD, chief of Neonatology/Perinatology at Riley Hospital and Hugh McK Landon Professor of Pediatrics, IU School of Medicine. “The breadth and depth of our expertise will provide families with a collective experience of comfort, confidence and support.”