

“To Make Man Whole,” Loma Linda Brings Care to Underserved Community

By Nora Haile
*Contributing Editor
Healthcare News*

Loma Linda University Medical Center Murrieta began as a joint venture between Loma Linda University Medical Center and the Physician’s Hospital of Murrieta LCC, which came about when PHM and representatives from LLUMC became acquainted and worked on a partnership agreement. Kathryn Stiles, director of marketing and communications for Loma Linda University Medi-

cal Center Murrieta, shared some statistics from a 2008 market study. She explained, “It’s public knowledge that Riverside County doesn’t have enough hospital beds, around 1.2 hospital beds per 1000 residents, whereas the national average is just over 3 beds per 1000, and 2.25 per 1000 in California.” The Murrieta-Temecula area has been the fastest growing in California for five years, and hospitals haven’t been able to keep up. As an example, the nearest high-end cardiology emergency treatment

facility is about an hour away.

But now area residents can look forward to a change. The new hospital will have 106 patient beds, a 19-bed Emergency Department, 12 ICU beds, four operating suites, two C-section rooms and two trauma rooms. All rooms are private including the Emergency Department, excluding a 4-bed observation bay. The hospital will have Maternity, Cardiology, Cancer detection and treatment, Orthopedics, GI services, house its



Artist's Rendering: Loma Linda University Medical Center Murrieta

own full service laboratory, and provide world-class imaging and diagnostics. The hospital is particularly enthused about a special operating room. “We have one OR that’s known as the Hybrid-OR, representing a \$2 million investment in cutting edge technology,” said Stiles. “It gives surgeons real time 3-dimensional images of the surgery site with minimal radiation to the patient.” The equipment is the Artis Zeego by Siemens, which has advanced imaging capabilities paired with minimal radiation to benefit high-risk patients who are coping with multiple disease processes.

The building’s design objectives were to improve and support the flow of medical steps taken for patient care. To that end, physicians worked directly with Stokes Architecture to design the center’s flow to minimize confusion and overlap. In the sunlight-filled Critical Care Unit, for instance, they developed nurses’ stations to have excellent line-of-sight. “In each wall there is a small window set to let a nurse see each patient via line-of-sight, even while the nurse sits at a computer,” Stiles stated. Then there’s the OR layout, with an elevator that goes directly to the ER.

As Stiles explained, “When people who come into the ER need to go immediately into surgery, they avoid being exposed to main public corridors. It’s a very limited use, key-operated, secure eleva-

tor only used for crisis situations.” She notes that though the ER is not slated to become a trauma unit right away, they are planning ahead. “We have two trauma rooms that can convert and are equipped to become surgery rooms.”

This type of foresight is typical to the Loma Linda team. In fact, based on community needs and patient demand, a Phase 2 expansion plan stands ready to undergo the approval process. Should things go as planned, within a couple of years they would add a tower that provides approximately double the capacity for service. “Of course, the expansion would be based on the demands of the community,” Stiles clarified. “It would be at that point that we could expand service lines, such as providing for more pediatric support.”

Of course, from a safety standpoint, earthquake standards are always top of mind in California. To ensure meeting the latest standards, the OSHPD (Office of Statewide Health Planning & Development) has worked hand-in-glove with the project team since day one. Accordingly, the new medical center meets 2010 OSHPD standards, likely making it the most earthquake safe healthcare facility in the country.

“We’ve had two grand opening events to-date which included community leaders, local, state and federal elected officials – all who have been behind us from day

one,” Stiles said. With over 11,000 attendees to both recent celebrations, it sounds as though Loma Linda University Medical Center Murrieta is receiving a warm welcome.

Despite the PPACA’s regulatory changes regarding hospital ownership and the effect on the original venture, the business structure remains focused on their ultimate goal of exceptional patient care. The group feels that the model with which they began aligned incentives, physicians’ interests and assured positive patient outcomes. Stiles, stressing that it isn’t a political stance for or against the healthcare bill, says the organization is simply passionate about physician involvement in the healthcare delivery process in order to improve patient care.

Regardless of hurdles, Loma Linda University Medical Center Murrieta continues to be on-schedule and on-budget. “We feel we are blessed,” Stiles said in closing. “We’re adhering to the mission and values that Loma Linda has perpetuated for 105 years.” Certainly, the surrounding community will benefit from an organization that lives their motto “To Make Man Whole.”

For more information about Loma Linda University Medical Center Murrieta, contact Kathryn Stiles, Director of Marketing & Communications, (951) 704-1940.

Reprinted with permission from the California Healthcare News. To learn more about the California Healthcare News visit cahcnnews.com.