



Guam Memorial Hospital Authority

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Press Release

(For Immediate Release)

GMHA Shares Update on its MCH Units

(Tuesday, September 13, 2022; Tamuning, Guam) There has been a lot of discussion recently concerning the Guam Memorial Hospital Authority (GMHA) and its Maternal and Child Health (MCH) units. As part of GMHA's commitment to transparency, we would like to share our progress in improving the MCH experience for our patients, their families, and our staff. We will focus on the status of Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) in the MCH and recruiting efforts to secure additional OBGYNs, neonatologists, and pediatricians.

There are several ongoing CIPs in the MCH unit. One of the largest is upgrades to the air conditioning. GMHA is installing a new Air Handling Unit (AHU) in the L&D unit in October 2022. The new AHU will solve a portion of the cooling issues in the L&D.

Another project GMHA is planning on is reconfiguring the layout of the NICU and nursery to improve functionality, convenience, and safety for parents and nurses. GMHA recognizes the current layout of these units is crowded and sometimes difficult for nurses and parents to navigate. One reason for reorganizing the area has been the larger number of critically ill infants being born, including some born to methamphetamine-addicted mothers who experience withdrawal symptoms and other complications.

The high number of critically ill newborns is why GMHA put out a call last month for neonatal nurses to assist our nursing staff. While the extended hours GMHA nurses are working have not affected the quality of care, we are stretching our nursing resources. GMHA does not currently have a neonatologist on staff but has access to telemedicine consultations with UC Davis physicians for Pediatric Nephrology, Infectious Diseases, Intensive Care, and a Pediatric Pulmonologist. GMHA also uses its Telemedicine program to ensure a neonatologist is always available to provide guidance in treating these newborns.

The shortage of OBGYNs, neonatologists, and pediatricians has resulted in GMH competing nationally to secure providers. GMHA is aggressively recruiting for OBGYNs and has hired two, but both postponed their arrival due to family emergencies. The hospital currently has seven OBGYNs but three are on emergency leave. This is why Dr. Joleen Aguon, Associate Administrator of Clinical Services, contacted providers in the community who might be interested in supporting GMH until our three OBGYNs return and the new ones arrive.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the shortage of pediatric specialists is expected to continue through 2034. GMHA will continue its recruiting efforts with the additional funding provided in the newly passed FY2023 budget. "GMHA assures the community that these shortages will not affect the care mothers and infants receive at our hospital," said Administrator/CEO Lillian Perez-Posadas, "Our Emergency Department physicians are available 24/7 and trained to treat a broad spectrum of ages, including expectant mothers and pediatric patients."



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In the interim, GMHA continues its recruiting efforts and looks forward to additional funding from the newly passed FY2023 budget to compete for the highly sought-after specialists. In particular, GMHA has been and will remain focused on securing additional OBGYNs, neonatologists, and pediatric providers as well as endocrinologists, gastroenterologists, cardiologists, specialty surgeons, internists, neurologists, anesthesiologists, radiologists, orthopedics and pulmonology/critical care providers.

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