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Banner focuses on design

Abundance of light to support patient healing, hospital officials say

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The Arizona Republic

Apr. 5, 2007 12:00 AM

Sure, Gilbert's Banner Gateway Medical Center will have all the normal trappings of a hospital when it opens in the early fall.

But Banner Health officials are going out of their way to make sure it has a lot of natural light, too. The hospital is being designed with a "canyon theme to bring the peacefulness of nature indoors and create a warm and welcoming environment," according to the company.

The hospital will feature an outdoor "canyon dining" area, an outdoor patio for staff, a meditation garden, a garden for new and expectant mothers, and large windows in corridors and patient rooms.

"There aren't many places you'll be able to walk into in this building and not have a connection to the outdoors," said Becky Kuhn, the hospital's chief executive officer. "That's clearly tied to patient healing and patient outcomes. It also works for staff as well."

The hospital's connection to nature is one part of the guiding philosophy for the design of Banner Gateway, an "evidence-based design," she said.

That research supports healing environments and patient care. Here are more ways patients will see this architectural method in the hospital:

- Private patient rooms, each covering 240 square feet.
- Large sliding doors leading to the bathroom in each patient room to prevent falls.

- Patient-controlled lighting and temperature in each room.
- A spa tub for women who are in labor. (Women will not give birth in the tub.)
- Reduction of noise levels throughout the hospital, by using upgraded acoustic ceiling tiles, sound-absorbing flooring and a two-way, voice-activated, hands-free communication system called Vocera for staff.

"I would call them added features that contribute to patient safety and patient outcomes," Kuhn said. "That's why it's important."

The \$207 million hospital will open with 167 private rooms and a 36-bed emergency department. The hospital campus, at U.S. 60 and Higley Road in Gilbert, can add two patient towers. It eventually could accommodate more than 500 patient beds.

Banner Gateway will be the third hospital to open in Gilbert. Gilbert Hospital and Mercy Gilbert Medical Center opened in 2006.

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