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Facility for 'medically fragile children' opens in East Falls

By Brian Hickey · April 10, 2014



When Nina Mapp was pregnant with her first child, ultrasound images gave her doctors reason

When Nina Mapp was pregnant with her first child, ultrasound images gave her doctors reason for pause.

“The bones,” the North Philadelphia woman recalls being told last year, “are growing weird.”

The words scared Mapp, as nonspecific as they were at the time.

“I didn’t know what to think,” she said. “What was going on in my mind? ‘Was it something I did? Did I not drink enough milk?’”

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When she gave birth prematurely to Hayden at Albert Einstein Medical Center more than six months ago, those words became a clear diagnosis: Osteogenesis Imperfecta Type III, commonly referred to as “brittle bone disease.”

Somewhere to turn

Mapp shared that story after addressing the crowd at an East Falls ribbon-cutting ceremony for Pediatric Specialty Care (PSC), which ceremonially opened its sixth Pennsylvania location on Thursday morning.

The 50-bed, 36,000 square-foot “post-acute care facility” — located on the former MCP

Hospital/Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania site between Henry Avenue, Scotts Lane and Roosevelt Boulevard — is considered a bridge of sorts between hospitals and family homes.

That's exactly what Mapp has come to know it as.

On the second day of Hayden's life, he was moved from Einstein to St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. There, he would spend five and a half months in the neonatal intensive-care unit (NICU).

Born weighing 3 pounds and 2 ounces, Hayden remained relatively motionless for his first months of life. A mother's fear lingered, possibly intensifying, but for only so long.

"After month one or two, he started kicking and smiling," she said. "His hands were moving. He was trying to roll over."

With a feeding tube and a tracheostomy, Hayden was also gradually outgrowing that NICU.

Nina had never heard of PSC at that point, which had a February "soft opening," but when she was taken on a tour, she knew it was the place for Hayden.

"Everybody treats him like he's been a patient for years. He's been improving so much at the new facility," she said of Hayden's March arrival at the bright, homey PSC. "He's going to be here for a little while. He's a blessing, and I thank God for the doctors, the nurses and everyone involved here."

About PSC

PSC was formed in the early 1990s with a facility in Point Pleasant, Bucks County and has since expanded to Lancaster, Quakertown, Doylestown and Aliquippa (near Pittsburgh).

Located in Four Falls Center, the Post Acute Partners Co. entity is expected to employ as many

as 70 healthcare professionals and administrative staff.

“This is a big day for us,” said Chief Executive Officer Michael Burns of its sixth facility opening in a widely respected healthcare hub like Philadelphia.

PSC’s mission is serving “medically fragile children” ranging from premature babies, children injured in car accidents and those suffering from chronic illnesses to birth defects, paralyzing or neuromuscular disease and traumatic brain injuries.

The “bridge” it builds between hospital and home is buttressed by an aim to avoid readmissions. Not only is this done with medical attention for the child, but by educating family as to how to care for the girl or boy once they head home.

“Readmissions can be devastating to a child, and costly to the healthcare system,” explained Alexa Sweeney, vice president of clinical services for PSC, of a facility that serves to open beds since hospitals have a post-acute care facility to which to send patients like Hayden Mapp.

Thursday’s event

As PSC staffers read books and engaged patients in therapy in airy rooms down the hall, the lobby was abuzz with the sounds of both an A capella group and speeches from PSC staff and elected officials (or their representatives) lauding the facility’s arrival.

Both state Sen. Vincent Hughes and state Rep. J.P. Miranda addressed the crowd and presented proclamations to PSC.

Representatives for U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah, Gov. Tom Corbett, Mayor Michael Nutter and City Councilman Curtis Jones Jr. did the same, and the record reflected that a congratulatory letter was sent from U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey’s office.

“I’m very, very proud and happy that you are locating here and adding to the quality of care in the region,” Hughes said.

Located on the former hospital's third and fourth floors, PSC has state-licensing approval for 32 beds with renovations allowing for the additional 18 beds scheduled to be completed within the month.

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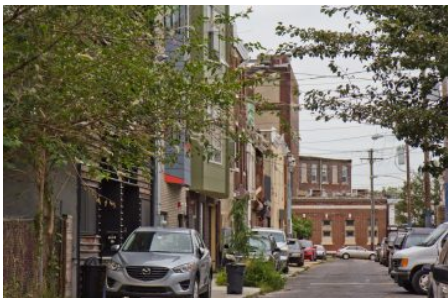
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