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Providence Tarzana Medical Center Celebrates 40 Years Of Service

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TARZANA (Oct. 7, 2013) – After 12 years, the Vietnam War ended. The Nixon Administration began unraveling. And disco was the rage. It was 1973, and in the San Fernando Valley, a new vision was realized: Tarzana Hospital opened.

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Today, Providence Tarzana Medical Center celebrates its 40th anniversary, four decades as a leader in healthcare in the West Valley, with a reputation as one of the region's best hospitals.

Over the years, the hospital's leading-edge heart center, pediatrics program and women's center have been highly recognized, and this year HealthGrades, a consumer rating agency, named Providence Tarzana one of the Top 100 Hospitals in the nation for quality outcomes across multiple disciplines.

The 249-bed hospital, acquired in 2008 by Providence Health & Services, specializes in women's healthcare, cardiology, vascular, orthopedics, oncology, gastroenterology, neurology and wound care services. The pediatrics unit is affiliated with Children's Hospital Los Angeles and the hospital is home to one of the largest neonatal intensive care units in the Valley.

Nurse Carol Hunter has been there since Day 1 and remembers the little things.

"It was like moving into a new home," said Hunter, whose two daughters were born at Tarzana. "It was very difficult because everything was new, and we didn't know where everything was. The doctors were trying to get used to each other and it was a while before it all settled down.

"If you had asked me 40 years ago if I would still be practicing here today, I never would have thought I would be. But I'm here, and the time has gone by so fast."

Jane Matthews, a charge nurse in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, remembers thinking the new hospital looked like a hotel. She was fresh out of nursing school and recounts changes she has seen over the 40 years. Matthews began work at Tarzana 40 years ago today.

One is the move to family-centered nursing. Her long-ago supervisor didn't believe parents should stay with their sick children – and if they did they should pay! Today, it is the opposite.

"We've evolved so much – we're much more open with families and believe the parents are an important part of the child's healing process," she said. Jane also reflects on how technology has evolved over the years, particularly noting the advancements in treating sick children. "Not only has technology improved, but home remedies have evolved so much that parents are able to treat conditions like asthma when the symptoms first emerge, eliminating hospitalization in most cases.

"I didn't think I would be at one place for so long," she added. "But the people I work with keep me here. We have a strong group of nurses. They're not just co-workers, they're friends. We've raised our kids together. We've seen them get married."

The hospital was the vision of attorney Maurice Lewitt and accountant Marvin Strin, who had provided their services to many physicians and hospitals. Through their work, they realized there was a great need for a community hospital in the Valley. The West Hills, Sherman Oaks and Encino hospitals were small at the time and didn't have the capacity for the growing Valley population.

Lewitt and Strin formed Setco Inc., a public company that would own, operate and manager hospitals. Setco acquired 10 acres and an executive committee of seven doctors was formed and included Lawrence Chusid, M.D.; Leonard Goldman, M.D.; Richard Grossman, M.D.; George Wilson, M.D.; Alfred Pomeranz, M.D.; Harold Lovitz, M.D.; and Leon Rain, M.D.

In the first year of construction, Setco merged with Hyatt Corporation, fueling rumors that the structure was going to be a hotel, not a hospital. But rumors were quelled as physicians and the community learned of the Hyatt Medical Enterprises subsidiary that specialized in operating hospitals. After three years and an approximate cost of about \$8 million, Tarzana Hospital opened, and the first patient was admitted on October 8, 1973.

Hyatt continued to manage the hospital until 1980 when it sold the hospital American Medical International (AMI). In October 1995, nearly 15 years to the date Tarzana admitted its first patient, National Medical Enterprises merged with AMI and became Tenet.

In 2008, Providence Health & Services announced the acquisition of the hospital and in September 2008 the name became Providence Tarzana Medical Center.

About Providence Health & Services:

Providence Health & Services, Southern California, is a Catholic not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing quality and compassionate health care and reaching out to the poor and the vulnerable in the communities it serves. Providence Southern California operates five award-winning acute-care medical centers in the Los Angeles area, providing a full continuum of healthcare services: Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Mission Hills, Providence Tarzana Medical Center, Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Centers in Torrance and San Pedro. The region also has numerous ancillary facilities including Hospice care, long-term care, numerous outpatient clinics, Providence Medical Institute, Providence High School and an affiliation with Facey Medical Group. For more information, visitCalifornia.providence.org.

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