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Tripler celebrates grand opening of single family room NICU

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By **Tripler Army Medical Center News Release**



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HONOLULU -- Tripler Army Medical Center celebrated the grand opening of its single family room Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Feb. 14, [here](#).

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The NICU, which has been under renovation for more than two years, was the result of more than 10 years of planning.

"(Today) is a big milestone for not only Army Medicine, but certainly for the Tripler ohana as we open phase two of this single family room NICU," said Brig. Gen. Dennis Doyle, commander, Pacific Regional Medical Command and TAMC, in his opening remarks. "I appreciate all of you coming here to mark this really significant day."

The NICU is now equipped with 19 single family rooms with 22 beds, including three rooms dedicated to caring for twins. It is the first single family room NICU not only within the state of Hawaii, but also the Department of Defense.

A soft opening was celebrated April 3, 2012, when the first phase of renovation was completed. The construction was done in two phases in order to keep the NICU operational.

"We wanted this NICU to have the latest design elements and the best state-of-the-art technology that was available to make it the safest NICU for patient care," said Dr. (Col.) Sarah Lentz-Kapua, assistant chief, Department of Pediatrics, TAMC.

In part, what makes Tripler's NICU unique is the noise reduction/sound proofing that has been installed in the ceiling and floor. Because most of the babies in a NICU would under ideal conditions still be in mother's womb, sound levels are kept to neonatal standards. With dimmer light capabilities and a device to monitor sound level, the rooms provide the optimal environment for babies' hearing, growth and overall development.

"The most precious patients we have are those newborns and the most precious of the precious are those ones who really need the extra care that Dr. Lentz-Kapua and her whole team provide for up here," Doyle said.

Another key element allowing for private rooms for baby and parents is the technology that allows nurses to monitor rooms from other locations on the ward.

"(The monitor and nurse call system) are really the cornerstone of safety for our precious

little patients," Lentz-Kapua said. "All the rooms are configured similarly to make it easier and safer to move from room to room and provide care. The care team and the families really find that the new environment is much quieter and a more calming place for patient care."

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