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Blythedale Children's Hospital Celebrates New Inpatient Building

New \$65.3 million, 86-bed facility features most advanced rehabilitative technology and care for New York metro area's medically fragile children

(VALHALLA, NY – November 21, 2011) **Blythedale Children's Hospital**, New York's only specialty children's hospital, celebrated the completion of its new 86-bed, 56,000-square-foot inpatient building with current and former patients, as well as elected officials, community leaders, board members and staff, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony today.

The \$65.3 million project – the first new addition to the hospital in more than 40 years – addresses shifts in the hospital's patient population over the past several decades and dramatically strengthens the hospital's capacity to provide the most advanced care to medically fragile children in the New York metropolitan region.

The new inpatient building features:

- **Infant, Toddler and Post-Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit**
- **Dedicated Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Unit**
- **Pediatric / Adolescent Inpatient Unit**
- **Family Resource Center**

"For generations, Blythedale has treated some of the New York metropolitan area's most vulnerable patients," said **Owen Gutfreund, Chairman of Blythedale's Board of Trustees**. "Now, their recovery from serious complex medical conditions will take place in the most advanced specialty children's center of its kind. To everyone who made this amazing project a reality – from fund-raising and planning, to designing and building – thank you, on behalf of the board, our employees and especially our patients and their families."

Blythedale President and CEO Larry Levine commented, "We at Blythedale Children's Hospital have always prided ourselves on delivering the highest levels of quality healthcare and medical rehabilitation services to the most medically fragile patients – children with severe respiratory conditions, congenital heart ailments, traumatic brain injuries, severe burns and a host of other injuries or illnesses. In this new building, with the latest in medical technology and enhanced amenities, we will have the facilities to match the extraordinary level of expertise and care that our doctors, nurses and therapists have provided for so many years."

The new additions include:

- **Infant & Toddler Unit** – Blythedale’s new 46-bed Infant, Toddler and Post-Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit is optimized for the care and treatment of the Hospital’s most medically complex patients, many of whom require weaning from mechanical ventilation. The new unit allows these young patients to be grouped together in a single unit where they will benefit from a combination of the finest multidisciplinary medical talent and the most advanced patient care monitoring systems available. In addition, private and semi-private patient rooms are large enough to accommodate a parent staying bedside.
- **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Unit** – In the new 10-bed dedicated TBI Unit, each room will be private, sound- and light-controlled, and optimized for the specialized, multidisciplinary care that patients with TBI require. The unit will also feature its own facility for physical, occupational and speech therapy, as well as the latest in neurophysiological monitoring equipment to monitor recovery from coma and detect subclinical seizures.
- **Pediatric/Adolescent Inpatient Unit** – This new, 30-bed Pediatric/Adolescent Inpatient Unit is designed to create the most advantageous environment for recovery and rehabilitation. It features a teen lounge where patients can spend some time away from traditional hospital surroundings and just be kids.
- **Family Resource Center** – With a kitchen and dining area, TV and family room, medical library and computer access, Wi-Fi capabilities, a playroom and a meditation room, the Family Resource Center is designed to accommodate the needs of parents and family members who must spend extended periods of time visiting patients at the Hospital.

Among new amenities are larger, brighter inpatient rooms, with pull-out beds for family members; dedicated isolation rooms for children with compromised immune systems; the most advanced wireless patient monitoring systems; a spacious new entrance and lobby and additional space for clinical and family support services.

In addition, a “flying solo suite,” which includes an education center, will allow families to familiarize themselves with basic medical care techniques, such as administering medications or operating devices such as portable ventilators, in order for them to continue providing quality care after their child’s discharge.

The new inpatient building – the first phase of a two-stage modernization plan – is custom-designed with the highest attention paid to the specific needs of medically fragile children and their families. With increased flexibility with patient beds, more advanced technology, and specialized services such as a dedicated TBI Unit, Blythedale will be positioned to help patients achieve even better outcomes by allowing them to leave the acute care setting earlier to begin rehabilitation and recovery.

Blythedale Children’s Hospital treats more than 300 children daily through its inpatient and day hospital programs, making it one of the largest children’s services in New York State. In addition, the Hospital provides diagnosis and treatment for hundreds of outpatients with a wide range of medical and rehabilitation needs. More than half of Blythedale’s patients are admitted directly from neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) and pediatric intensive care units (PICUs). The average length of stay at Blythedale is 52 days.

The new building is designed by MorrisSwitzer – Environments for Health, an architectural firm that specializes in healthcare facilities. The building is designed to create a warm, inviting and playful environment using simple shapes and a simple color palette on both the exterior and interior. Lend Lease was the construction manager for the project.

Patients are expected to be moved into the new facility in early December. The former facility will be renovated to enhance in-patient services with an expanded speech and audiology center, a new center for assistive technology, and an expanded day hospital. Work on this second phase of construction will begin in January 2012 and should be completed in 2013. Blythedale is also the only hospital in New York State with its own, on-site public school district, comprising grades pre-K through 12, and is specifically designed to meet the unique needs of its inpatients and day hospital patients. The school will remain in its current location, attached to the original Blythedale building.

About Blythedale Children's Hospital

As New York's only freestanding, specialty children's hospital, Blythedale Children's Hospital is dedicated to improving the health status and quality of life of children with complex medical illnesses and disabling conditions through superb multi-disciplinary patient care, teaching, research, and advocacy programs. Blythedale's board-certified physicians, nurses, and other clinical staff (social workers, respiratory therapists, clinical pharmacists, Child Life specialists, etc.) and New York State's largest hospital-based pediatric therapy department (PT, OT and Speech) work together to provide intensive and innovative multi-disciplinary clinical and therapeutic care to help children achieve their medical and rehabilitative goals for independent living, and return to their communities. Blythedale is also the only Hospital in New York State with its own, on-site public school district.

For more information about Blythedale Children's Hospital, visit www.blythedale.org.

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