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\$84 million Irvine hospital renovation starts

Hoag Hospital Irvine will reopen in the fall of 2010.

By IAN HAMILTON

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

IRVINE – The doctors and nurses left long ago and the sign out front says "No emergency service currently available at this location." All that remains of the maternity ward on the second floor are the windows which allowed thousands of newborns their first bit of sunlight.

"Four of my grandchildren were born over there," said Irvine City Councilwoman [Christina Shea](#) as she recently toured the torn-down second floor of the former Irvine Regional Hospital. "I recognize the windows."

The maternity ward is no more, but construction workers are busy modernizing the building for its future as [Hoag Hospital Irvine](#). The building is undergoing an \$84 million renovation for a fall 2010 opening as an acute-care hospital.

"I feel like we're slightly ahead of schedule, but I

don't want to jinx anything," said Robert Braithwaite, chief administrative officer for Hoag Hospital Irvine.

When completed, Hoag Hospital Irvine will be a 244,000-square-foot general hospital with an emergency room, inpatient and outpatient services and 154 beds with eight operating rooms, along with space to build three more.

"This will not be a 20th century hospital. In my view, this is not a hospital at all – it will be a health facility," said Richard M. Afable, president and CEO of Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian.

Roughly 500 doctors, nurses and staff were dismissed in January after Irvine Regional chose not to renew its lease on the building.

Instead, Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian, with its primary hospital in Newport Beach, took over the building with plans to modernize and staff it with a significant number of doctors and nurses from Hoag in Newport Beach. According to Braithwaite, some half of the nursing staff will come from the Newport Beach hospital.

"There are plenty of people here [in Irvine] who got their medical care in other places, including Hoag," said councilwoman Beth Krom, who also attended the recent ground-breaking ceremony. "Hoag is a brand that the people in the city of Irvine are already familiar with, and I think it's a quality brand."

Patients who used Irvine Regional are using other Orange County hospitals during the transition, including Kaiser Permanente across the street at Sand Canyon Avenue and Alton Parkway.

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Hoag Hospital Irvine will also feature an orthopedic center to open in 2011.

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