

A Decade of Dedication: Banner Health

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Banner Health knows how to celebrate good health. September marked its 10th anniversary and next month is the beginning of more happy years at Cardon Children's Medical Center.



Banner health is a big name, especially in Arizona where it is the largest nonprofit employer and second largest private employer in the state. Arizona's 11 Banner hospitals serve more than 35 percent of all Maricopa County inpatients, and deliver more than 25,000 babies a year. With such a powerful presence, it's hard to believe Banner Health is only 10 years old, celebrating one decade of good health last month. Maybe Banner got so big, so fast because it sticks to the mantra, "We exist to make a difference in people's lives through excellent patient care." When you have passion like this, word spreads fast.

Banner doctors and staff might feel like they are receiving an anniversary gift, but in fact they are giving one back to the community as they open the doors to the new long-awaited Cardon Children's Medical Center building, located on the Banner Desert Medical Center campus. On Nov. 2, the kids and doctors will move into the \$356 million newly built facility, which is named after Mesa's Cardon family who generously donated \$10 million toward the project.

The new hospital features such things as a 24-bed cancer unit; a pediatric emergency department; a 104-bed neonatal intensive care unit (which increases the number of beds for premature newborns by more than 50 percent); six dedicated pediatric operating rooms; 24 pediatric intensive care beds and a pediatric radiology unit, but above all, the new medical center means more space for the kids, and therefore more room to heal. The Cardon Children's Medical Center will offer 248 pediatric beds in total, up from the 128 beds in Banner Desert that would routinely be at full capacity. "Banner has listened to the community and invested in excellent facilities, physicians, nurses and other clinical staff to help relieve the shortage of inpatient pediatric beds and tertiary pediatric programs. We are excited about raising the bar in pediatric care for Arizona and the Southwest," says Rhonda Anderson, pediatric administrator at Cardon Children's Medical Center.

But beyond all the technicalities that make the doctors and parents happy, there are plenty of fun additions for the kids. A lobby inspired by nature welcomes the children, then play rooms, computers, and interchangeable art in their rooms keep them entertained. Age-appropriate "hang-out" spaces, like the coffee house area for teens, help to maintain stability and normality while in treatment, which can assist in faster healing. Also, each pediatric room has a pull-out bed for parents to sleep on, which makes it much easier to keep family close by for support. "The amenities were designed with families in mind. At Cardon Children's, families are not visitors, they are integral parts of the care team. We've designed the rooms to be home-like and comforting, with family space in every room. The room is their house, and we encourage families to stay to be with their child," Anderson says.

As one of the largest nonprofit systems in the country, Banner Health has managed to provide what the state of Arizona and the kids of the Valley need: more pediatric beds and a state of the art children's hospital. Families from all over applaud the new Cardon Children's Medical Center and wish Banner another decade of health and well being.

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