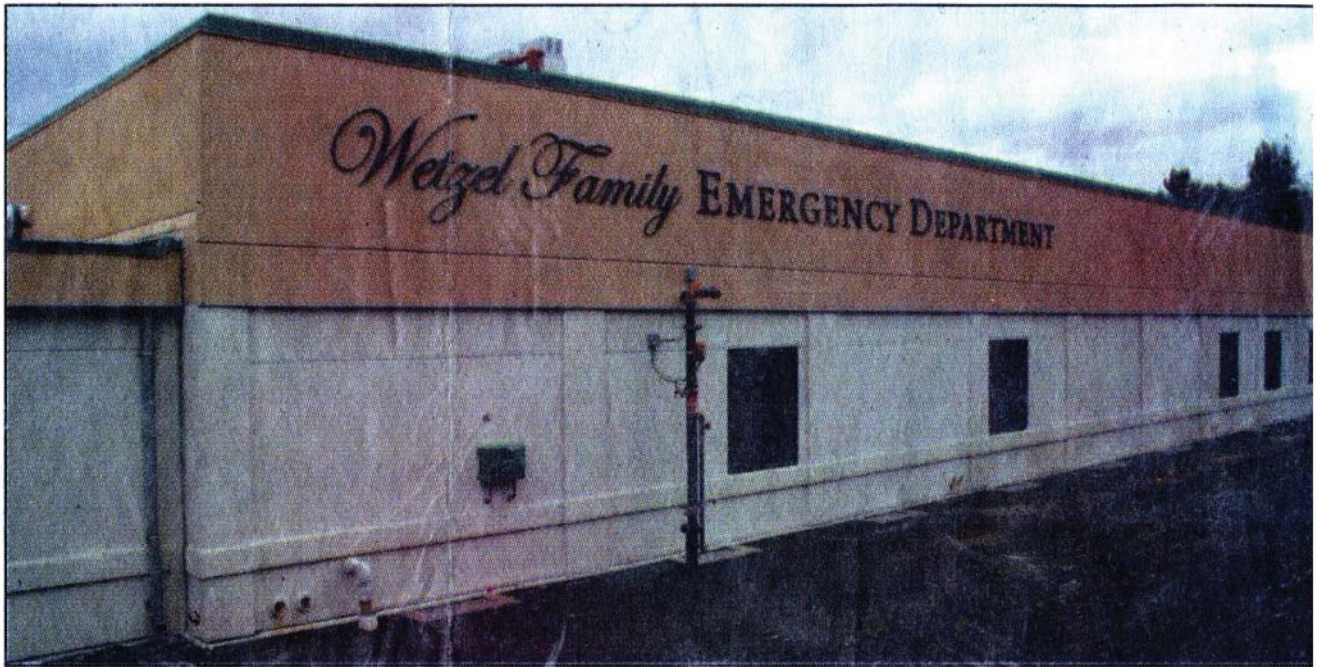


## Hospital opening ICU, emergency room



**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY** ♦ The new Wetzel Family Emergency Department is nearing completion and will be open to the public for tours on Saturday, Feb. 2. Healdsburg District Hospital CEO Evan Rayner said the ED should be operational within a few weeks, after final construction inspections have been received and licensing is complete.

PHOTO BY RICK TANG PHOTOGRAPHY

## Community invited to take a look at changes on Saturday, Feb. 2

By **KERRIE RUSSELL**  
Tribune Editor

Big things are happening at Healdsburg District Hospital.

Until now, if your child broke her arm, your mom had trouble breathing or you just didn't feel good, a trip to the emergency department at Healdsburg District Hospital probably began by taking a seat in one of the bleacher-style chairs in a main hallway. Then, you would be transferred to one of three beds in a 900-square-foot room, with only a curtain between you and the next sick patient.

But after a \$2 million donation from Alexander Valley's Harry and Maggie Wetzel, as well as numerous other donations, the new \$4 million emergency department is set to open in about three weeks. In fact, the waiting room alone of the new ED is about the same size as the entire former emergency department.

And the community will get a chance to catch the first glimpse of the 6,500 square foot emergency department this Saturday, Feb. 2 at a public celebration and tour with hospital staff from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

During the same time that construction was ongoing for the new emergency department, hospital officials were working on a strategy to re-open the four-bed intensive care unit, which has been closed since 2001. A \$1 million donation from Patricia and Raymond Chambers will enable the hospital to officially re-open the doors of the

ICU in the first week of February.

"All of these enhancements are an integral part of our plan to better service our community, keeping health care close to home and continuing to be a center of excellence in other service lines," hospital CEO Evan Rayner said. "We could not have done this without the great support of the community and the teamwork of the medical staff, board of directors, employees, and the healthcare foundation, because teamwork is the key to success."

Hospital supporter Greg Wilcox said he has also been pleased at the broad-based support from the community.

"The generosity of the community is incredible," he said. "This is an unprecedented project. When people coalesce around something, that's when you become a community."

The ICU is equipped with state-of-the-art beds and monitors. The beds, at \$29,000 apiece, weigh patients, put them in sitting or standing positions and have a special surface to support the well-being of the patient.

"When Sutter closes, we'll lose half the ICU beds in the county," said Jan Kiely, chief of nursing operations at HDH.

With the addition of Syd, a robot that allows doctors at other

locations to see through a remote presence monitor and analyze a patient's condition in Healdsburg, Kiely said, "we'll have the best doctors in the world in our ICU."

And if the brand new, state-of-the-art emergency department and ICU weren't enough, the hospital announced last week that Betty and Edward Kozel, Sr. have agreed to a \$1 million donation to fund a stroke center at the hospital.

"Quick access to quality healthcare is both challenging and crucial for a remote, rural community like Healdsburg, and we're very happy to help Healthcare

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Foundation Northern Sonoma County in its efforts to improve healthcare in our area," Edward Kozel said. "We know all too well that strokes can affect anyone — not just seniors. Our own son suffered a mild stroke in his early 40's."

Through the Kozel Stroke Institute, which is expected to open later this year, neurologists at California Pacific Medical Center will be able to examine and evaluate stroke patients in Healdsburg and discuss the case with doctors at HDH, also through Syd.

All seven of the hospitals in the rapid response program will have similar telemedicine links, but the program's hub will be the Kozel Stroke Institute at HDH, run by Dr. James Gude.

Physicians at Healdsburg District Hospital's Stroke Center will be linked to Dr. David Tong, medical director of the Stroke Care Center at CPMC. Tong is a nationally recognized leader in stroke management and will also be available through the remote presence robot.

Recent years of increased patient enrollment, new services and more than \$11.5 million in financial

support from large donations to the Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County has allowed for the hospital expansions.

The intensity of care provided at the hospital will be highly enhanced with the ED and ICU allowing us to better service the district and the region," Rayner said.

The new emergency department will include eight private exam rooms, a nurse's station with a central bank of monitors, large trauma rooms specifically outfitted for stroke patients and pediatric, and obstetric emergencies.

"It is truly a big gift to the community," Kiely said.