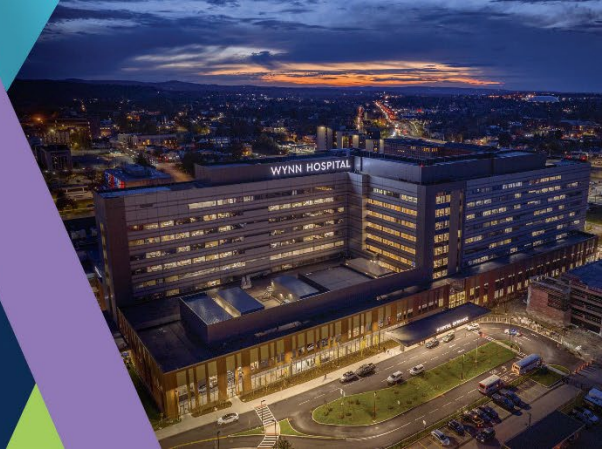
Just the Facts

MVHS & WYNN HOSPITAL

There's so much happening in healthcare in our region – at times it's hard to stay updated! That's why Just the Facts is being reinvigorated. This weekly publication, published on Tuesdays, will provide you with the latest information about MVHS and the Wynn Hospital!



TOPIC FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2025:

Department Spotlight: Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

NICU Awareness Month is in September, and is a perfect reminder to recognize the patients, families and healthcare professionals who provide care in the NICU.

About the NICU at MVHS
Did you know MVHS has the only Level II NICU in the Utica area? The nursery is ready with the best equipment, specialized physicians known as neonatologists and an excellent nursing staff.

What is a Neonatologist?
A Neonatologist is a pediatrician who specializes in the medical care of premature and sick newborn infants. They diagnose and treat complex neonatal conditions, coordinate care with other specialists, offer prenatal counseling for high-risk pregnancies and support infants and families through challenging health situations. Neonatologists work with pediatricians, obstetricians and family practice physicians on a consulting basis. They are on call 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week to assume the treatment of sick or premature newborns and to assist at high-risk deliveries.

What other healthcare professionals work as part of the team in the NICU?

- **Registered nurses** (RN) – NICU RNs are registered nurses who specialize in providing critical care to premature and ill newborns. They monitor the newborns' vital signs, administer medications and IVs, provide specialized treatments like tube feedings and offer emotional support and education to families.
- **Therapists** – The therapy team at MVHS includes Occupational Therapists (OT), Physical Therapists (PT) and Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) who provide supportive care to the premature infant population through evidence-based evaluation and intervention. The approach stems from a prehabilitative model in which team members work in collaboration to decrease the risk of developmental delay and improve quality of life. Interventions may include:
    - Support for the developing sensory systems
    - Positioning
    - Activities to facilitate generalized strengthening
    - Massage to promote positive touch and encourage parent/infant bonding
    - Family/caregiver education early communication therapy
    - Oral motor stimulation and interventions for successful feedings.

OT, PT and SLP work closely with the interdisciplinary team members on the unit, as well as parents and caregivers, to foster family-centered care and work towards developmental milestones.

Infants receiving early intervention in the NICU from the therapy team demonstrate smoother transition from hospital to home and have greater long-term outcomes in their developmental skills for movement, play, communication and speech development.

- **Behavioral Health** – A Behavioral Health Licensed Social Worker is embedded in the Maternity Department and can provided an array of individualized services, including:
    - Mental health assessment
    - Supportive counseling
    - Safe car seat and safe sleep items
    - Specialty services and resource-linkage to parents whose infants are admitted to the NICU
    - Postpartum mood and anxiety disorder screening
    - Referrals to community counselors as needed.

  In the event that transportation is a barrier to bonding with infant in the NICU, the Licensed Social Worker also takes steps to ensure that transportation is obtained, so all parents can visit their infant during the NICU admission. The Licensed Social Worker may also provide linkage and referrals to home nursing, and any additional community-based supports that provide continued education, risk-reduction and specialized support to parents post discharge. The Licensed Social Worker strives to ensure that all of the Maternal/Child Client System's needs are addressed and met, both during the hospital stay, as well as when infants and mothers leave our facility.

How many rooms does the NICU have?
Our Level II NICU provides eight private rooms for parents who wish to stay overnight while their child is in the NICU. We also have a larger overflow room for additional babies. There is a parent bathroom and shower for parents who wish to stay overnight. Many services, programs and equipment used in this unit are made possible thanks to the support of the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals (CMN Hospitals) at MVHS.

How does CMN Hospitals support the NICU?
The MVHS Foundation is proud to be a member hospital of CMN Hospitals. CMN Hospitals is a nonprofit organization that raises funds for more than 170 children's hospitals worldwide. MVHS is committed to ensuring every child in our community has a healthy future.

Gifts made to CMN Hospitals allow MVHS to continue to enhance the maternal and child services that we provide for our community. CMN Hospitals provides state-of-the-art equipment, community programs and staff education, so that every baby and child treated at MVHS and the Wynn Hospital receives the best possible care.