

HEALTH

Hospital completes \$41M ER expansion

By Melissa Simon
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Simi Valley Hospital's expansion of its emergency services department is officially complete.

On March 2, the hospital celebrated the completion of the three-phase, \$41-million project with the dedication of the Thakkar Family Emergency Pavilion.

The pavilion adds 5,500 square feet to the existing emergency department, which now includes 18 patient rooms (a jump from the previous 10), two triage areas, a formal grieving room, a decontamination room and a paramedic radio room.

Jennifer Swenson, the hospital's president/CEO, said the new rooms are "vital to the community in a time of crisis."

"What makes (the ER) so special is the care being given by the doctors and staff," she told a crowd of more than 200 at the March 2 dedication. "(Every day) starts off as a quiet morning and then by the end of the day, staff has treated multiple strokes, heart attacks and more.

"They take whoever walks through that door because they are the safety net for the community in terms of patient care."

Simi Valley Hospital opened its doors in August 1965 and underwent its first ER expansion in 1985, when the department served an average of 10,000 patients per year. By 2014, that

number had grown to about 30,000 patients per year.

The new pavilion is named after Simi Valley Hospital's Dr. Kant Thakkar and Dr. Irma Hariman, the husband and wife who kicked off fundraising for the latest expansion with a \$1-million donation in July 2010. The project had been announced seven months earlier.

Thakkar told dedication attendees the donation was "just a start" to get the project going.

"This is our mother hospital and we want to thank you for your contributions, because without the donors, this wouldn't have happened. Nothing we give will ever match the generosity the hospital has offered the Thakkar family," the doctor said.

"We are honored to have been part of such an important project for the community."

Dr. Alfred Yu, emergency department chief of staff, said he's seen many great changes over the 13 years he's worked at the hospital. The expansion, he said, has helped improve patient care.

"I can tell you this is a tremendous addition to the community, and the patients appreciate the space," he said.

Longtime expansion

Michelle Foster, president of the Simi Valley Hospital Foundation, said a total of 2,535 donations, including a joint gift of \$300,000 from nearly 600 hospital employees, paid for the



NEW DAY—Above, Dr. Alfred Yu, left, and Director of Emergency Services Julia Feig, right, watch as Barbara Monsauret releases a flock of doves during the March 2 dedication ceremony for the new Thakkar Family Emergency Pavilion at Simi Valley Hospital. At left, Jeannetta Purdue, surgical manager at SVH, watches the dedication ceremony from the second floor of the ER pavilion. The dedication marks the completion of Simi Valley Hospital's \$41-million expansion project, which has been in the works since late 2009.

MICHAEL COONS/Acorn Newspapers

expansion.

"What can be said about such an achievement?" she told attendees. "I certainly couldn't

come up with words as eloquent as Mother Theresa, who said, 'It's not how much we give but how much love we put into the giving.' And we feel the love of our donors every single day."

"To Dr. Thakkar and Dr. Hariman, thank you so much your generosity and dedication," she continued. "You have inspired and continue to inspire so many people, and we're proud to be here today to celebrate you and your family, and to dedicate . . . this highly important project for our community."

The groundbreaking for the expansion occurred in September 2012. The final beam, Foster said, was placed on top of the new facility in August 2013. And in March 2015, hospital officials held an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the first phase of the project, which featured an expanded surgical suite.

"This is a chapter that is now closed, but there's more to come and that's the exciting part as we continue to grow," Swenson told the crowd.

Simi Valley Hospital
— Adventist Health

Are the Notes of Your Heart in Sync?

Atrial fibrillation (or afib) is the most common type of irregular heartbeat — yet not all types of afib are easily diagnosed. Without proper treatment, afib increases your risk of stroke five-fold, plays a central role in the development of congestive heart failure and may significantly impair quality of life.

Join Simi Valley Hospital cardiac electrophysiologist, Miguel Salazar Jr., MD, to learn about several treatment options to control or cure afib, including advanced medical therapy, catheter ablation, and minimally invasive procedures.

These treatments can restore normal heart function and help patients with afib to maintain a healthy, active life.

Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2017

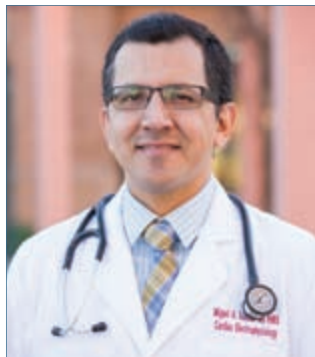
Time: 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Where: Simi Valley Senior Center
Room 106
3900 Avenida Simi
Simi Valley, CA 93063

Speaker: Dr. Miguel Antonio Salazar Jr.
Cardiac Electrophysiology

RSVP: Space is limited.
Please RSVP to **805-583-6363**

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