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Women & Infants Hospital debuts in USGBC national webinar series: featuring newest green rating system, LEED for Healthcare

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The RI Green Building Council announced today that the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island was selected to be featured in the U.S. Green Building Council's national webinar series on its newest green building rating system, LEED for Healthcare. The NICU will also be featured during the national CleanMed Conference April 5th in Phoenix. It was selected from over 150 LEED certified healthcare facilities in the US.

On March 17, Part 1 of the two-part webinar series introduced LEED 2009 for Healthcare and provided an overview of the distinct green building practices related to sustainable healthcare facilities. It includes the story behind development of the new standard relative to the Green Guide for Healthcare as well as the unique challenges that the rating system addresses. Part 2, launched March 31, outlines the specific credits added and modified from the LEED for New Construction rating system, the industry standard followed by Women & Infants. Part 2 references successful and unique health care projects and is aimed at green building and healthcare professionals.

The signature, five-story South Pavilion of Women & Infants Hospital opened in 2009 and houses the nation's largest, single-family room NICU. The project earned Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council—one of the first health care projects in the Northeast to achieve that distinction. Hospital and medical staff leadership set out to create a green building that was technologically sophisticated while providing a comfortable, dignified experience for patients and their families.

"Women & Infants always strives to surpass the needs and expectations of our patients and families. The South Pavilion project implemented several sustainable site strategies that helped us achieve Gold status as a LEED-certified building," said Constance Howes, president and CEO of the hospital. "It is very exciting that our efforts and achievement will help promote the U.S. Green Building Council's efforts with other organizations."

The Women & Infants project included the following sustainable strategies:

- * Installing a storm water system that reduces the burden on city infrastructure by capturing rain water, directing it to a filtration system and allowing it to permeate into the ground
- * Using light colored roof materials that prevent heat build-up, mitigating the "heat island" effect" and allowing mechanical equipment to run more efficiently
- * Creating preferred parking spaces for low-emitting and fuel-efficient vehicles
- * Installing highly efficient plumbing fixtures and drought tolerant landscaping, which reduced water usage by more than 30% and saves more than one million gallons of water a year
- * Using efficient mechanical equipment, increased insulation and high performance glazing that reduces overall energy consumption by nearly 20%

- * Recycling 89% of construction waste

- * Using products and materials with recycled content that are sourced and manufactured regionally to reduce the impact of extracting, processing and transporting raw materials

According to pediatrician-in-chief James Padbury, MD, the results of sustainability initiatives are evident every day to staff, patient families and visitors in the NICU. The mechanical system generates 30% more fresh air than normally required, temperature controls, day lighting and soundproofing all provide for maximum comfort.

"The single-family room design creates an environment that is sensitive to the needs of the baby and promises to have a profound effect on the recovery, growth and long-term outcome of a tiny infant," he explained. "The unit already achieves some of the best clinical outcomes in the nation, but this new environment should decrease dependence on respiratory support, decrease complications, improve weight gain, shorten hospital stays and improve the infants' developmental outcomes."

These effects have already been noted in a study conducted by Dr. Padbury and Barry Lester, PhD, director of the Brown Center for the Study of Children. The pair has been comparing data from infants treated in the hospital's old unit, which consisted of noisy, brightly lit bays where incubators were mere feet apart, unlike those being treated in the new NICU.

"The healthcare industry is by far one of the more important sectors that can benefit from the practice of green building design and construction. Patients in green hospitals have greater emotional well-being, require less pain medication and other drugs, and have shorter hospital stays," said Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO & Founding Chair, U.S. Green Building Council.

For more information on the webinar, visit www.usgbc.org click on Education, E-Learning, Webinars
For a complete LEED Project profile, visit www.usgbcRI.org and click on the marketplace tab.

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