

# New UCLA hospital is dedicated

The \$1-billion facility, designed by I.M. Pei, won't open for another year. It will feature natural light, views and private rooms.

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Even though its oft-postponed opening could still be as long as a year off, the new \$1-billion Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center on Monday welcomed hundreds of doctors, nurses, donors and patrons for a look-see at the I.M. Pei-designed hospital.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, former Gov. Gray Davis and former First Lady Nancy Reagan were on hand for a dedication ceremony before guests toured sample high-tech operating and emergency rooms and private patient rooms.

"This is a proud moment for California and an exciting new chapter in UCLA's Medical Center's five decades of excellence," Schwarzenegger said.

The 520-bed hospital, still mostly empty, was originally set to open in late 2004, but cost overruns and construction delays have made that initial schedule seem downright wishful. UCLA officials are no longer pinpointing a precise date or even a month for when the new facility will receive patients, preferring to say that will happen between March and June of next year.

The construction budget for the project, which will replace the earthquake-damaged UCLA Medical Center across



**CEREMONY:** Business leader A. Jerrold Perenchio, former First Lady Nancy Reagan, former Gov. Gray Davis and architect C.C. Pei, from left, arrive at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

Westwood Boulevard, has ballooned to about \$829 million from an initial estimate of \$598 million in 1998. Including the new hospital's 6,000 high-tech devices and 18,000 pieces of furniture, the total cost will reach about \$1 billion, said James Atkinson, senior medical director of clinical operations for UCLA Medical Center.

UCLA officials have blamed many delays and requests for more funds on the rising costs of steel, drywall and other materials, as well as design changes to accommodate medical advances.

Delays were to be expected, one official said. "This is a very complicated project," said Gerald S. Levey, vice chancellor for medical sciences and dean of the university's David Geffen

School of Medicine. "The bottom line is this will be a much more efficient hospital."

UCLA officials say the design by Pei and his son, C.C. "Didi" Pei, creates the illusion of several smaller hospitals rather than one massive one. The first three floors form a base. Above, architects incorporated four towers. Three quarter-rounded towers house patient rooms and individual nursing "pods." A triangular tower houses intensive-care units, with the bed stationed in the center of each room to allow 360-degree access to the patient.

The towers are staggered so that light can spill in from all sides and so that patients, nurses and doctors can enjoy views of the campus, Westwood

Village and hillsides. Each patient will have a private room with Internet access, a bathroom and a couch that folds out into a bed for family members.

The 1-million-square-foot structure incorporates 26,000 tons of steel and 80,000 square feet of window glass.

The abundant natural light and picturesque views are aimed at creating a pleasant atmosphere and speeding the healing process.

Exterior walls are encased in 18,000 panels of putty-colored travertine marble, imported from the family quarry in Tivoli, Italy, of the late Carlo Mariotti, a patient who had been treated at UCLA Medical Center.

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