

In Willis-Knighton Hospital's new intensive care unit, the nurse on duty can check every heartbeat of as many as six patients as she reads the dials and gauges before her. At left, Mrs. Hazel Apgar, R.N., sits

at the controls of the unit. A positive pressure machine used to help a patient breathe is demonstrated at right by Mrs. Connie Sasser. Wall-mounted oxygen and vacuum units are ready for use at a moment's notice.

The Changing Hospital Scene

By MARY LOU TEMPLE
Of The Times Staff

A man with wires leading from his arm to a shiny machine nearby lay breathing quietly on the hospital bed.

In a glass-enclosed booth a figure in white checked lighted dials and pips on a radar-like screen.

It wasn't another NASA experiment for space travel, but a demonstration of the workings of Willis-Knighton Hospital's new intensive care unit—the first in the Ark-La-Tex.

The six-bed unit in which dan-

gerously ill patients can receive 24-hour surveillance of heart beat, blood pressure, temperature and any changes in condition will be on view today with the rest of the \$1.5 million addition to the hospital during an open house from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

James K. Elrod, hospital administrator, said the intensive care unit will be operated for patients who are critically ill and need constant observation and professional care.

"Formerly, costly private duty

nursing care would have been required for these patients," Elrod pointed out. Charges for intensive care service will run from \$50 to \$55 per day, as contrasted to some \$74 per day for around-the-clock private nursing.

Intensive care will be available to all patients, with admission being determined solely by the physician in charge, Elrod said.

Dr. A. A. Bullock Jr., vice president of the medical staff, explained the uses of equipment kept ready in the unit to aid patients at a moment's notice.

"We are equipped to care for cardiac emergencies, serious post-operative cases, badly burned patients or those injured in accidents—any cases requiring unusual care," Dr. Bullock said.

Each patient bed is curtained off from its neighbor and equipped with wall mounted oxygen, suction and blood pressure recording devices. An individually controlled fluorescent light above each bed can be turned high enough to permit the doctor to perform minor surgery if necessary in an emergency. Heating and air conditioning for the unit are handled by an independent system.

The registered nurse at her desk has a clear view of all patients as well as monitoring machines before her, and the nurse is in view to all patients for their reassurance.

Intensive care units will soon be available in all local hospitals. Similar facilities are already near completion in two other local hospitals and in planning stages for the others.

At Willis-Knighton, the intensive care unit is located on the first floor of the new addition adjoining the emergency, X-ray and central

supply departments. It is not the only innovation visitors will see at the hospital. As the visitor steps into the gold-carpeted lobby his first view is a modern glass-walled cafeteria designed to accommodate 70 persons, and the gleaming corridor leading to new elevators.

The maternity and pediatric departments are located in the new addition. Each of the children's rooms features a stainless steel crib, royal blue and white striped window shades and a large blue chair which converts into a bed at night for the comfort of a mother staying with a sick child.

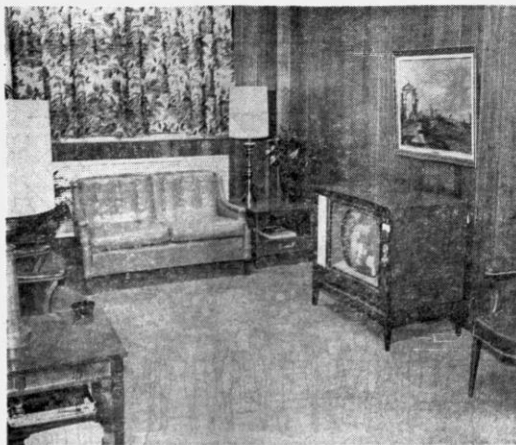
Elrod said no additional charge will be made for mothers staying the night with their children, and this provision was one of the most popular innovations in the hospital.

The most popular convenience for fathers is a room furnished in masculine style in the maternity department where fathers can watch color television or walk up and down on the carpeted floor, depending on their temperament, while they wait for the stork.

Another thing fathers and grandparents cheer for is a room off the nursery which looks on the babies through safety glass and is open at all hours. A "leaning shelf" beneath the glass accommodates proud paternal elbows as the family decides whose nose the baby has.

Remodeling and redecoration of the original hospital, both inside and out, is almost complete, Elrod said.

"Today's open house is the culmination of plans started under the late Mrs. Louise Fry, former administrator," he added, "and is the first stage in future planned expansion."



Times Photos by Langston McEachern

The new waiting room for expectant fathers is a far cry from the old one. It has carpet, comfortable modern furniture and a color television set.