As summer transitions into fall, construction crews continue to work hard each day bringing the new 
UCSF Medical Center at Mission Bay to life.

Years of collaborative planning with UCSF staff, patients and families will come to fruition on February 1, 2015, when the 289-bed hospital complex for children, women and cancer patients opens its doors. The project also realizes UCSF's vision of building one of the world's most innovative health care centers.

"I am incredibly excited for our team to work in this beautiful space that they have all had the opportunity to create," said Kim Scurr, executive director of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital and Hospital Operations Planning at Mission Bay. "This is the ultimate employee engagement exercise, and I cannot begin to articulate the enthusiasm, pride and vision that every member of our team has for this new hospital. It's a very emotional experience."

One of the many members of the UCSF community who has been involved in the planning is Cassandra Robertson, a nurse and patient care manager for the pediatric operating room at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.

According to Robertson, the entire OR was created with staff input, which resulted in a design that will truly serve the people going to work there each day. For example, the ORs are built around a central core where supplies will be stored and readily accessible, so that staff will not have to walk to several places gathering supplies for cases.

Robertson, who has spent her nearly 35-year career at UCSF, described her feelings about what will be the first dedicated children's hospital in San Francisco in a recent video interview.

"I'm excited as I see the hospital take shape and walk through the space envisioning our team working and caring for patients in a place that was designed just for them," she said.

"All of my career I've taken care of pediatric patients in a hospital that was designed to care for adults, and we've certainly made it work," she added. "But children have special health care needs, and I believe we have captured that within our design of the building and the workflows we have established for Mission Bay."

In addition to the involvement of hospital staff in the planning process, UCSF patients and their families have offered invaluable contributions by weighing in on what they believe makes an ideal hospital environment. According to Scurr, the patient and family committee has been one of the project's most productive planning groups, selecting everything from wall colors and furniture to the amenities that will be available in the hospital's common areas.

"The patient and family is at the center of everything we do, and one of the guiding principles of the project team has been to create a hospital that provides a healing environment with children- and family-friendly services, while providing an efficient place to work for our caregivers," Scurr said. "I have been involved in the planning for almost 10 years now, and it still seems surreal that we will actually be working in this beautiful facility."

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