



Receiving Care in Albert Lea and Austin

Frequently Asked Questions for Patients

Mayo Clinic is proud to be a part of the Albert Lea and Austin communities. Providing the highest quality health care close to home is our main focus. To do that, we are adjusting where some services are offered. We are aware that there is confusion regarding what and why changes are being made and the timeline for the changes. Below are answers to the most common questions we've heard from community members in the area.

Q. Why are some services moving to Albert Lea and some are moving to Austin?

We want to reiterate that both the Albert Lea and Austin campuses are open, and both locations will have a wide range of services – including emergency departments. You can receive the majority of the care you need in Albert Lea or Austin.

As medical care advances, the needs of patients, providers and facilities nationwide are changing. Most treatments and surgeries can now be done without overnight hospitalization (or “inpatient” care). That means there is less demand for facilities designed and equipped for overnight stays. To best serve patients, we are moving inpatient care services to the Austin campus.

We are also planning to consolidate labor and delivery services, as the decreasing rate of births in Albert Lea and Austin coupled with the shortage of physicians cannot sustain two birthing centers at the standard of care our patients expect. One birthing center equipped with amenities and equipment that today's families seek will provide an exceptional experience for patients and staff alike.

Q. When can we expect these changes to take place?

These transitions are taking place over time, to limit the disruption to our patients.

- In 2017, the Intensive Care Unit was transitioned to Austin and expanded to accommodate more patients; in 2018 the new Psychiatric Services Unit opened in Albert Lea.
- The week of June 24, 2019, most inpatient care (overnight stays) will transition to the Austin campus.
- Preparation continues for the transition of childbirth services (labor and delivery) from Albert Lea to the Austin campus. Transition timelines we've provided are estimates and may change as they are impacted by factors such as staffing. Currently, staffing shortages are a concern in multiple areas including OB providers, nursing staff, and anesthesia. We are currently evaluating all options, and will provide updates to staff and the community on the impact to the transition timeline. We want to ensure that we are able to provide safe, high-quality care for moms and babies.

Prenatal care (office visits during pregnancy) and postnatal care (office visits after delivery) will remain available on both Albert Lea and Austin campuses.

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Q. How many rooms will be in the new Medical/Surgical Unit once it is fully renovated?

The remodeling of the new medical and surgical unit has begun and is expected to be completed over the next year and a half. When remodeling is complete, the new hospital unit will have a total of 37 private rooms, which is 15 more than both campuses currently have in total, and two-semi private rooms, all of which will have state-of-the-art equipment and offer an improved healing environment for both patients and their families.

In addition, the medical and surgical unit will include a larger family waiting space with natural lighting and a new two-story, glass-enclosed building extension that will connect the main entrance of the medical center directly to the newly expanded hospital floors.

Q. Will the Albert Lea Emergency Department remain open after the hospital care moves to Austin?

Yes. The Albert Lea Emergency Department remains open 24/7. Four new observation beds will be available on the Albert Lea campus for patients who are seen in the Emergency Department or who have had out-patient surgery and need additional time to recover or to be monitored for up to 24 hours. The observation beds provide patients with a safe option other than an unnecessary overnight stay in the hospital.

Q. Will I have to pay for a transfer to Austin?

No. Necessary ambulance transfers to Austin from the Albert Lea Emergency Department will not be charged to our patients.

Q. What services remain on the Albert Lea campus?

The vast majority of care that most patients regularly need remains available on both Albert Lea and Austin campuses, including:

- Emergency care 24 hours per day, with access to telemedicine specialty care
- Observation beds (for extra recovery time or observation of less than 24 hours)
- Family medicine, internal medicine and pediatric office visits
- Obstetrics (pre- and post-natal care) and gynecology office visits
- Office visits with specialists (Cardiology, Orthopedics, Endocrinology and more)
- Same-day (outpatient) surgeries and procedures
- Pharmacy, laboratory services, radiology (X-rays, CT, MRI, etc.)
- Cancer care
- Same Day Clinic care (immediate non-emergency care)
- Express Care clinics in Hy-Vee and Express Care Online
- Hospice care, Rehabilitation and many other specialty care services.
- Services that are unique to each campus, such as Dialysis and Hyperbaric Medicine/Wound Care in Albert Lea, are still available on those campuses.

In addition, our clinics in New Richland, Wells and Lake Mills also are available for primary care close to home.

You can also contact a member of your care team for a question or concern about your particular needs. For more information on background, a complete list of services and transition planning visit:

mayoclinichealthsystem.org/albert-lea-austin-facts