

# Northeast care for the smallest of newborns

By Dan Friedman

**THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT** (NICU) at Scottsdale Healthcare Shea reached Level III designation in February, meaning its staff can handle the most premature and critically ill newborns.

The 24-bed unit “brings home to an institution” says Polly Hrenchir, clinical director of women’s services.

Beyond providing state-of-the-art care, the NICU’s goal is to create a comfortable atmosphere for new parents because preemies sometimes must stay several months until they are strong enough to live outside the womb. The NICU staff works to create a quiet, comforting atmosphere that is as homelike as possible despite easy access to the latest technologies to monitor babies’ progress.

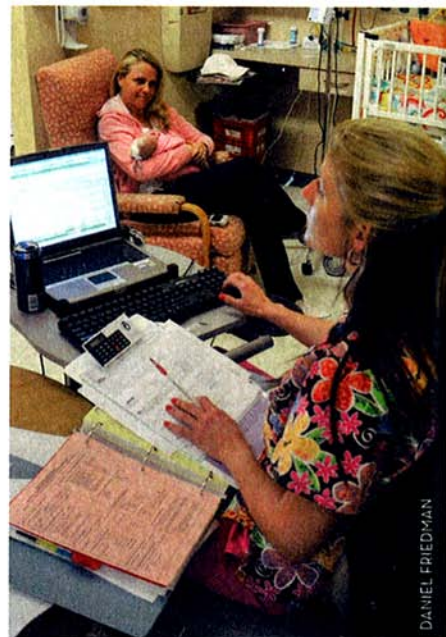
Its proximity is what makes the Level III NICU so important to the Rea family of Scottsdale.

Tana Rea has been coming two to three times a day during the two months since her daughter Daisy Rea’s birth. Her

husband Glenn often calls in the middle of the night—“Can I have my nurse, please?”—to see how Daisy is doing. The Reas have two other children ages 7 and 9 at home, so traveling to one of the other Level III NICUs in the Valley would be arduous. Tana calls the Shea NICU “a little piece of heaven” and says the nurses are “angels” with whom parents develop a special relationship during the weeks and months they care for premature babies.

Advances in neonatal care have increased dramatically in the last two decades, says Peter Stevenson, M.D., one of two medical directors of the NICU, which already has cared for babies as small as 460 grams (25 weeks gestation) and as young as 24 weeks gestation (700 grams).

The NICU, which also provides support to mothers with high-risk pregnancies, is staffed by neonatologists (physicians who take care of premature babies or sick infants), neonatal nurse practitioners, specially trained nurses



Nurse Ariane Steyaert, RN, BSN, and Tana Rea with her daughter, Daisy.

and respiratory professionals who provide 24-hour in-hospital coverage for infants and families who require advanced care.

The hospital competed a rigorous survey and evaluation by the Arizona Perinatal Trust last fall to qualify for Level III designation. [shc.org](http://shc.org).