Here are key dates in the nearly century-long history of medicine at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus site.

November 1917: A U.S. Surgeon General’s officer, Col. George E. Bushnell, visits Denver to scope out potential locations for a military hospital to serve soldiers returning from World War I with respiratory and pulmonary conditions.

May 1918: The Denver Civic and Commercial Association purchases the 594-acre Gutheil Park Nurseries in Aurora from A.H. Gutheil for $150,000 and leases it to the U.S. Army for $1 per year. Construction begins on a planned medical campus.

October 1918: Army Hospital #21 is dedicated; Clair Martin is the first patient.

1920: Army Hospital #21 is renamed Fitzsimons General in honor of Lt. William T. Fitzsimons, an Army medical officer who was the first official military death in WWI. Fitzsimons becomes the Army’s sole tuberculosis hospital.

1936: Despite tight Depression-era budgets and threats of closing, Fitzsimons is given a reprieve after a visit from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who promises it will stay open.

1937: The Army Air Corps Technical School (later known as Lowry Air Force Base) is established nearby, helping to ensure Fitzsimons’ future.

1937: Fitzsimons land is turned over to federal government ownership.

1938: $3.75 million in funds from the Works Progress Administration, a Depression-era relief program, is awarded to Fitzsimons for a new main building. Construction begins in August.

Dec. 3, 1941: Building 500, the largest building in Colorado to date, is dedicated: 290,000 square feet, 608 beds.

Dec. 7, 1941 — The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor thrusts the U.S. into World War II.

Dec. 17, 1941: Fitzsimons starts accepting casualties from attack on Pearl Harbor. Temporary buildings are constructed to boost capacity to about 3,500 beds.

1943: Fitzsimons becomes the largest military hospital complex in the world with 322 buildings.

Dec. 11, 1943: John Kerry is born at Fitzsimons General Hospital where his father was being treated for tuberculosis. He later becomes a U.S. senator and is now secretary of state.

Sept. 24, 1955: President Dwight D. Eisenhower is treated for a heart attack. He stays at the hospital until Nov. 11.

1974: Fitzsimons Army Hospital is renamed Fitzsimons Army Medical Center.


1992: The University of Colorado Health Sciences

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Oct. 30, 2003: The refurbished suite of rooms occupied by President Eisenhower during his recuperation from a heart attack in 1955 is opened to the public. Cost: $90,000 from the Colorado Historical Fund and a grant from Wells Fargo Bank.

Dec. 18, 2003: The Children’s Hospital board approves plans to build at Fitzsimons. Price tag grows to $462.8 million.


Summer 2004: UCHS images the University of Colorado Denver, creating one subdivision of the university overseeing both CU Denver and the Anschutz campus.

December 2005: CU raises $192.6 million from sale of certificates of deposit to build new medical, nursing and pharmacy schools at Fitzsimons.

Dec. 11, 2006: The Fitzsimons site is renamed Anschutz Medical Campus in recognition of the $91 million provided by Philip Anschutz and the Anschutz Foundation.

April 28, 2003: Gov. Bill Owens signs bills to create the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and the Anschutz Foundation.

June 17, 2003: CU announces a gift from Dr. Gaspar Lazzareschi to build a new school for orthodontists at Fitzsimons. The gift is initially reported as $267.9 million; the amount later disputed by Lazzareschi.

Feb. 26, 2003: The Anschutz Foundation donates another $30 million to spain up planned 250 hospital beds on the new campus.

Jan. 10, 2000: Philip Anschutz’s Anschutz Foundation donates $25 million grant to help build a medical complex; it’s the largest gift in CU history up to that time. Funds will pay for 15 percent of the $170 million, and patient care programs.”

July 19, 2000: The board of Regents unanimously approves granting Children’s Hospital an option on 37 acres at the Aurora site.


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