

OHSU Hospital Expansion Project – Frequently Asked Questions

Audience: All OHSU Members and interested community (donors, board members, patients)

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Location: To be used on O2 (<https://o2.ohsu.edu/about-ohsu/ask-ohsu/ohp.cfm>) and on public website (URL TBD)

The OHSU board of directors approved in October 2021 a proposal to restart the OHSU Hospital Expansion Project. The frequently asked questions below highlight some themes of the project. With a project of this size, the content and details will grow over time. Check back for updates.

[INTERNAL] If you have more questions, please send them to AskOHSU@ohsu.edu or share your feedback via the relay huddle form.

One thing we want to address up front is that OHSU Hospital expansion will include a plan to ensure adequate staffing for the complementary increase in inpatient beds. Our existing health care colleagues have contributed tremendously to the unpredictable needs of the community during this pandemic. You have carried a tremendous burden and we understand that hearing about hospital growth, which comes with more change and more patients that need our care, may be unsettling right now. You are not alone. We will create sustainable staffing models and recruitment plans that support a healthy work environment and contribute to the physical expansion of our hospital.

WHAT DOES THIS PROJECT INVOLVE?

The expansion, slated to be completed in 2026, will significantly increase OHSU's adult inpatient capacity to provide the highest level of care for those who need it most. The hospital expansion project solves for four needs at OHSU: inpatient beds, operating rooms, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) beds, and an expanded perinatal program. All told, this will add 184 new inpatient beds.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS PROJECT?

Oregon has the fewest number of hospital beds per capita compared to any other state. The pandemic has highlighted an urgent need to address this in order to continue to support the evolving needs of Oregonians. Expanding our facilities will improve access to specialized care, enhance our ability to provide high acuity health care, continue to meet the needs of our expanding and aging population, and keep up with growth in the metro-area and beyond.

WHAT IS CAUSING CAPACITY ISSUES?

There are multiple factors contributing to the unprecedented capacity issues at OHSU and other Portland-area hospitals, including staffing shortages and high demand for critical care hospital admissions from emergency rooms, surgeries, clinics and transfers from across the state that exceed our staffed bed capacity. We continue to care for a large number of patients with COVID-19, including those requiring long lengths of stay during their illness. Some patients who may have deferred care during the pandemic now are presenting even more acutely in need of our services, including those with behavioral

health conditions. The current and forecasted growth of the state is an underlying factor to all of these things.

WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT CAPACITY ISSUES?

There are certainly urgent capacity questions, and multiple factors are contributing to our unprecedented capacity challenges, including staffing shortages and high demand for critical care hospital admissions.

We have vastly improved capacity and patient flow across OHSU Health in the last several years, including starting Mission Control, a real-time inpatient capacity platform, and launching services like the Virtual ICU, which helps keep patients in their community as much as possible. We believe in providing the right care to the right patient in the right place, and by better managing transfers across our health system, we have successfully worked with community hospitals to improve care and preserve access to OHSU for those who truly need our unique services.

But we have more to do to improve capacity. Opening our technology-enabled Hospital at Home virtual unit is helping and we are beginning to explore other comprehensive programs, like a Connected Care Center that will be like Mission Control for our outpatient enterprise, and will intersect with hospital and emergency department access. We will continue to share information about how we are managing capacity in the near- and long-term.

WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT CURRENT STAFFING ISSUES?

Fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic and a labor market with an extraordinarily high demand and low supply of workers with the requisite skills for critical needs areas, the health care industry is encountering incredible staffing and recruiting challenges. OHSU has activated a number of strategies to recruit and retain staff, as well as fulfill immediate staffing needs.

HOW ARE WE PLANNING AHEAD FOR STAFFING THE EXPANSION?

As this expansion project gets underway, we recognize a more long-term solution is needed to address staffing. This is why we're establishing a staffing plan and workgroup to address just this topic. We will ensure there is adequate staffing, including nurses, providers, professional and support services, pharmacists, social workers, and more. With five years to completion, it is likely that we will see workforce expansion in nearly all health careers, as long as we increase the size of the pathways in training programs. We will look at pathway programs by working with the deans of our professional schools and program leaders to design innovative programs. Additionally, we will remain open to starting new programs or partnering with other institutions that train medical assistants, pharmacy, lab and imaging technicians, and respiratory therapists, among others.

HOW MUCH WILL THIS PROJECT COST?

The total project including expanding inpatient units in Kohler Pavilion and an addition to OHSU Hospital, building additional operating rooms, and support for temporary relocations for renovations is estimated to cost around \$650 million.

We expect the cost of this expansion will be returned within approximately 12 years of this investment, and support the future growth of research, education and clinical care at OHSU well into the next 50 years.

We will seek additional funding specifically for NICU and delivery services through authorization from the OHSU board later this fiscal year.

HOW IS IT BEING FUNDED?

OHEP will be funded with \$300 million cash from earnings and gifts and \$350 million from new debt issued. OHSU is able to use operating revenue and take on this debt in support of the expansion and our future because we have prudently managed resources and have generated a margin that sustains our missions. It is particularly important that OHSU – as a public institution – be a good steward of resources.

HOW MANY ADDITIONAL BEDS WILL BE CREATED?

It will add 152 licensed inpatient medical and surgical beds and provide shelled space for an additional 32 beds – a net total of 184 new inpatient beds, which increases hospital capacity by about a third. The project will also increase the number of adult inpatient operating rooms from 25 to 31. As a high-acuity trauma facility and a regional referral center for patients around the state and beyond, the OHSU Hospital expansion is designed to improve our ability to care for patients with the most critical health care needs.

WHAT IS THE CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE?

The five-year project will break ground in spring 2022, with completion expected in 2026.

WHAT INPUT IS BEING CONSIDERED WITH THIS PROJECT?

As we launch this project, and throughout the next five years of construction, there will be opportunities to incorporate feedback from you, the OHSU community. We encourage all OHSU members to reach out to their colleagues represented in the project management structure, described [here on O2](#).

Patient and community members were involved in design and planning sessions before the project was paused. We intend to re-engage patients and community members in the design as we go forward. Hearing a wide variety of voices will help us ensure decisions are made according to the needs of the community.

HOW WILL HOSPITAL EXPANSION IMPACT RESEARCH AND EDUCATION?

The expansion project will require a significant capital expenditure over the next five years, but it is critical to our ability to invest in our research and education missions in the long-term. We will need to balance the 1-5 year downward pressure the hospital expansion will likely put on research capital and other investments, with the longer-term upside the project will create.

We expect to enhance and expand educational experiences and training opportunities by increasing the number of places future health professionals can train. Building a pathway for the next generation of health care providers through education in complex care will help to establish long-term solutions to capacity and staffing challenges. We are designing hospital expansion to meet academic health center standards, which include spaces for learners within patient units. Hospital expansion may also enable an increased amount of clinical research, although the building is designed for patient care.

Although separate, the Hatfield Research Center projects are underway and could impact research programs. The HRC projects will increase capacity in that building's electrical and mechanical systems to support patient care. There are no longer plans related to hospital expansion that will significantly impact the 11th and 14th floors of HRC.

WILL THE EXPANSION CREATE ADDITIONAL REVENUE TO SUPPORT EDUCATION AND RESEARCH?

Growing OHSU's capacity to serve patients covered by Medicaid will likely increase OHSU's ability to leverage federal dollars in partnership with the state of Oregon through the intergovernmental transfer program, which supports both Oregon Health Plan and the research and education missions at OHSU. In addition, growth of OHSU's patient capacity will help attract clinician scientists to also grow our clinical research programs.

WHAT WILL THE EXPANSION FOR THE NICU, LABOR AND DELIVERY LOOK LIKE?

As part of the project, we are also looking at how we can expand and modernize perinatal services as well as modernizing and expanding the neonatal intensive care unit. We are currently assessing options and expect to go back to the board for approval of that portion of the project later this fiscal year.

HOW ARE WE SUPPORTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ON THIS PROJECT?

Diversity, equity, inclusion and access are incredibly important to a project of this size, and to OHSU as Oregon's academic health center. We received feedback from patients and from the neighboring communities during the initial design process and City of Portland public comment period. As specific programming conversations continue, we intend to ask for more input and involve more voices from the community OHSU serves.

There are numerous examples of equity and inclusion in the plans. We are focusing on equity in the physical environment by using gender neutral restrooms and enabling physical access for people of all abilities. The inpatient addition will be directly and easily accessible by enhanced Trimet and bicycle facilities on Campus Drive.

Skanska, the project's general contractor, has committed to multiple sustainability and diversity goals. For example, Skanska has workforce diversity goals of 30% minority and 15% female representation for both apprentices and journey positions. Also, their contract requires that 15% of the construction

supplier awards go to minority-owned, women-owned or emerging small businesses. All OHSU general contractors receive training related to anti-racism and anti-harassment.

WHY ARE WE SPENDING MONEY ON A BUILDING INSTEAD OF INVESTING THAT MONEY IN EMPLOYEE SALARIES?

Investing in our people, programs and places is one of the most important considerations in fulfilling our missions and preparing for future growth and success. We have, and will continue to, invest appreciably in employee salaries. This work began with pay equity studies in 2019, and continues as we make progress toward market-based compensation.

The OHSU Hospital Expansion Project in particular is an investment that will allow us to generate margin that will be invested directly back into our people – not only salaries, but in career advancement. One example is the OHSU Transition to Practice Program, which enables nurses to succeed in independent practice or qualify for specialty practice areas and increase their earning potential. We are also taking important steps toward fair and equitable compensation for all OHSU faculty, with the goal of meeting professional or discipline-based benchmarks as quickly as possible.

We will also continue to invest in our people by investing in our culture and the efforts to create a safe and welcoming environment where all members feel a sense of belonging. Our journey to become a trauma-informed, multicultural, anti-racist institution free of discrimination and harassment is of paramount importance.

