

August 27, 2013

Subject: Plans for long-term growth at UF Health

Dear Colleagues,

At UF Health, our top priority is to meet the health care needs of our patients, both in our local communities and throughout the state. Here in Gainesville, we've experienced continually increasing demands for services; our hospitals have maintained such high patient volumes that we are frequently functioning at full capacity. Thanks to your dedication and hard work, we continue to deliver the highest quality care to an ever-increasing number of patients.

Indeed, we anticipate even more growth in the future. That's why we're excited to share updated plans for the expansion, development and long-term growth of our Gainesville facilities. The details below demonstrate our commitment to delivering world-class care to our patients and serving as a regional health care resource for years to come. We are proud to contribute to the area's economic growth and to position UF Health academically as part of the University of Florida's initiative to be in the top 10 of the nation's public universities.

UF Health Shands Children's Hospital

Entrance (completion early spring 2014) – Children's hospital enhancements will include a new glass-front pavilion entrance and atrium, designed especially for pediatric patients and their families. We will offer dedicated elevators to children's hospital services. These changes will improve way finding and access to the co-located children's areas on the east side of the building. Preparations are underway and exterior enhancements are set to be completed early spring 2014. The welcome area lobby is scheduled to be complete in summer 2014.

Volunteer Services & Gift Stop Changes

To allow for the children's hospital entrance renovations, the Gift Stop – which will change to Lori's Gifts – team will relocate from the east lobby to the first-floor space where Volunteer Services currently resides. To make room, Volunteer Services staff will permanently move to the ground floor west of the atrium elevators (where Facilities was located). Renovations are starting now and moves will occur this fall.

10th Floor (completion in January 2014) – Meanwhile, 10th floor renovations continue to further expand children's services. The former executive suite (the 10-2 wing) will be transformed into a specialized pediatric intensive care unit—the Pediatric Congenital Heart Center (PCHC). We are extending the schedule for this PCHC renovation to allow for additional upgrades to the existing Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) on the 10-4 wing.

The PICU will temporarily move to the new PCHC area while PICU changes take place. When the PICU department moves back to the improved area, we will open the PCHC. These 10th floor additions will ultimately free some fourth floor space formerly used for pediatric cardiology, allowing for future pediatric area enhancements. We anticipate that these changes will be finalized this fall, with all moves completed in January 2014.

Mother and Newborn Services

Along with a focus on pediatric care, we have already made improvements on units dedicated to women's health. In 2012, we created a new women's unit on the ninth floor consisting of all private rooms for both post-partum and gynecology patients. Then, this past Spring, we renovated the third-floor entry to Labor and Delivery and its critical triage area, where patients are initially evaluated. The new area provides the warm welcome and privacy that we were not able to achieve in the past. The renovated east entrance pavilion and atrium will welcome women and their families with convenient access to these services.

We will soon focus on additional UF Health Shands Children's Hospital renovations, including the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, when these other steps are completed. The NICU expansion will begin within 12 months based on Lab Administration relocations (see below). We remain committed to expanding the NICU into one large, state-of-the-art facility to provide the best possible care for newborns and their families. In the longer term we intend to co-locate pediatric surgical pre-op, operating rooms and post-op areas as part of the children's hospital expansion.

Lab Operations/Support Services

Space is now available in the Medical Science Building (MSB) to accommodate Surgical Pathology late this year. The main hospital third-floor space vacated by Surgical Pathology will allow the expansion of the Core Lab and accommodation for Lab Administration in the same area. This co-location and expansion will enable staff to provide greater efficiency and services for inpatient and outpatient customers.

UF Health Shands Hospital Atrium

As we renovate the east entrance for patients accessing pediatric and women's care, we will reconfigure the existing UF Health Shands Hospital Atrium, which is centrally located off the hospital front circle. This renovated Atrium will be used as a patient and visitor waiting area with furniture that can be rearranged for special events. The area will be more patient and visitor focused and used as the main entrance for adult services. Patients entering from the east parking areas to access adult services will be directed to this Atrium through an entrance adjacent to the new children and family east entrance.

New Specialty Hospital Plans (completion in 2018)

With anticipated future growth, we will need more inpatient beds and associated clinical services in key adult care areas. Our long-term plans include continuing to develop the south campus on Archer Road with a new tower to house two specialty hospitals, for patients receiving neuromedicine and heart care. In order to provide state-of-the-art care to patients with neurologic, neurosurgical, heart or vascular conditions, we need state-of-the-art operating rooms and ICUs, along with complementary outpatient facilities

The UF Health Shands Hospital board of directors will evaluate a formal proposal next spring and we hope to begin construction next summer. The new building will be located on the east side of the Archer Road campus entrance, where the visitor parking lot and retention pond currently reside. Following planning and preparation, construction would last three years with an opening date in 2018.

Shands Guest House

The Shands Guest House, announced earlier this spring, will provide easily accessible campus lodging for visiting patients and their out-of-town family members or caretakers. Planning for the construction of the Guest house will now be harmonized with planning for the new tower.

As you can see, we have developed robust, long-term strategies for meeting our patient and community needs and remaining a trusted regional and statewide health care resource. We hope you share our excitement for the evolution of UF Health and the opportunities it will offer.

Thank you for working so hard to serve our patients and ensure our success.

Sincerely,

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