

Space issues driving surgical expansion at GMH

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 06 March 2014 15:31 -



Architectural firm from Denver hired to design project and complete a master facility plan.

Two new surgeons hired by Gothenburg Memorial Hospital and a rise in surgeries by visiting specialists means more room is needed.

The GMH board has hired a Denver architectural firm to design an expansion of the surgery area and a master plan for the facility.

Chief operating executive Mick Brant said Davis Partnership is designing both projects.

Brant said the hospital hopes to bid the project in May with construction to begin this summer.

Expansion and equipment is estimated to cost between \$2 million to \$3 million.

Because of costly equipment and required safeguards to control infection, Brant said surgery is the most expensive square footage in a hospital.

Brant said the building itself and hospital systems are important issues that have surfaced through strategic planning and focus groups,

“We want the building and its systems modernized and efficient to provide the best possible care,” Brant said. “And we want to ‘wow’ the visiting specialists so they’ll want to do procedures here.”

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Visiting physicians are part of that goal, he said, noting that they will offer more services and need the space in which to do it.



Currently, obstetrician/gynecologist Dr. Michael Trierweiler is performing surgeries and GMH awaits the arrival of orthopedic surgeon Dr. Gene Pontecorvo.

Dr. David Harrington has been a surgeon and family practitioners Dr. Jay Matzke and Dr. Garret Shaw also perform surgeries.

The hospital now has a surgical suite and a suite for endoscopy procedures used to examine a patient's digestive tract.

Brant said the plan is to ultimately have two surgical suites and a smaller room for endoscopes to the north of the existing surgical suites.

An increase in surgeries has resulted in hospital officials requesting permission from the Nebraska Health Department to add a 13th bed for patients.

More labor and deliveries are occurring with the addition of Dr. Trierweiler, Brant said, and many of Trierweiler's patients return to GMH for follow-up care.

Six babies will be delivered at GMH in May.

Brant said the master plan for the facility will be finished in May when more details will be

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available.

“We’ll probably do the work in phases over three to five years,” he said.

With the master planning process, the Wellness Center is one area that might be expanded with health-care focused on keeping people healthy, he said.

“As baby boomers age, the need for health care will increase,” he explained. “We’re already at a point where there are staffing shortages so it’s important to keep baby boomers out of the hospital by helping them be healthier.”

Expansion of the surgical area and the changes the board decides to make with a master plan are linked, Brant said.

“They will make the hospital stronger, with more services and the capacity to bring more people in,” he said.

Another benefit, Brant said, is that strong hospitals and schools help recruit businesses to town.

“We want to keep up with the other progressive things happening locally and provide as many services we can in town for our residents,” he said.

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