

## Regional Medical Center of San Jose Expands Capacity for Care

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Located in East San Jose, Regional Medical Center of San Jose is in the

early stages of a major expansion project. An HCA (Hospital Corporation of America) owned facility, RMC is the only hospital in the densely populated east area of the

city. The \$300 million dollar expansion project kicked off in March 2011 with an expected completion date of early 2014. HCA is an investor-owned company, one of the large-



**Artist's Rendering of the Expanded Regional Medical Center of San Jose, East San Jose, CA**

est in the country with 180 hospitals, and doesn't receive tax dollars.

RMC CEO Mike Johnson said that while seismic regulations drove the majority of the state's new hospital construction, there was also the issue of growth. "Looking at projections for growth in the corridor [demographics], it was clear the community needed more services and more capacity, and it was good business planning, too," he said. Johnson emphasized the dramatic changes in healthcare business, "We have a complex structure of services here. RMC is a Level II trauma facility, plus provides cardiac, stroke, cancer and surgical care, so we needed to build to those and other services."

Facilities Director Paul Tucker agreed, explaining that the 1955 structure was in need of modernization that wouldn't be satisfied by a renovation. He said, "We began seismic efforts prior to HCA buying us in 1999, knowing that a replacement facility was on the horizon. As the community hospital, we knew we needed to modernize to provide higher level and even better quality care, together with a caring environment for our patients." The design was completed five years ago, then submitted to OSHPD until its approval nearly 30 months later.

HCA and RMC needed the expansion's design to work not only for current requirements, but also to have staying power. As Johnson said, "A building like this will be around for decades, so you want it to be as flexible as possible to ac-

commodate future services. An efficient design that works well for staff, physicians and most importantly, our patients and their families, was our goal."

When it came to sustainability measures, Tucker pointed out that the project began before many places adopted classifications such as LEED. That said, he felt that if tracked, the building would fall somewhere around the Silver category. "HCA used best practices in their design processes, not purely following any design regimen," he said. "For instance, efficiency was important, as was durability of materials chosen." Look and feel will tend towards more enduring earth tones, not "trendy" colors. Efficiency and durability will be visually evident in many areas, such as Low-E windows with blinds between the glass panes. Nurses' stations will feature longwearing materials like solid surface countertops instead of laminates. The team has also focused on safety measures within the project design.

In actuality, there are several projects going on at RMC San Jose in addition to the four-story tower: a two-story wing addition that will add 35 more beds, a ~\$15 million remodel of the Emergency Department that will add 4500 sf to its capacity, plus a new Breast Care Center featuring digital mammography.

So far, progress is steady on all fronts, with the tower tracking to the expected timeline of a 2014 completion. San Jose residents living in the quadrant near I-680 and the 101

are watching the progress excitedly. Tucker said, "We've been talking about the expansion for years, so now that it's becoming a reality, the community sees it as the fulfillment of a promise."

The fulfillment comes at a good time for the San Jose community, with the privately funded project proving a boon to the local economy. While there are approximately 100 workers on two of the projects now, Tucker projects that at peak construction, there will be up to 250 workers on site. The hospital employment already generates jobs for around 1500 employees and 500 doctors; all ongoing payroll dollars for the community. Referring to the expansion, Johnson stated, "It's a privately financed project that benefits the public – investing in hospitals, healthcare and San Jose."

He also mentioned the recession has affected the hospital in their operations. "People who are out of work often delay healthcare, which is not good. You see far more patients in the ED." But HCA and RMC San Jose didn't let the economy derail their long-term goals. Johnson went on, concluding, "We are building for the future and we're very focused on why we're here – for the patient. Facilities, equipment, service and staff, all are investments toward providing great care. It's the right thing for the patient and for business."

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