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Heart hospitals aren't skipping a beat

By Jim Stafford
Business Writer

Demand for cardiovascular care among Oklahomans is so great that the $30 million expansion to the Oklahoma Heart Hospital in far northwest Oklahoma City wasn't getting done fast enough.

So hospital officials asked the general contractor, Nabholz Construction Corp., to speed up the project and complete it almost four months sooner than scheduled.

"It will probably cost us an extra $1.7 million to speed it up," said Dr. John Harvey, chief executive officer at the specialty hospital. "The way you do that is to pay more for overtime and weekends."

Instead of opening in April as planned, the new target date is Dec. 19, Harvey said.

The original cost for the 70,000-square-foot expansion, which will add 21 patient beds and quadruple the size of the emergency room, was $30 million. The hospital now offers 78 patient beds and 240,000 square feet of space.

Online at NewsOK.com
Watch an interview with John R. Harvey, M.D., as he talks about the expansion on the hospital and why the construction date was moved up.

Patient volume leads to expansion

So, why the need for such haste in adding to the hospital?

"I think the main thing is that we are busting at the seams," Harvey said. "Every day is a challenge to get people in and out because of the patient volume."

The winter months bring most demand for heart hospital services, so Harvey wants to ensure that the hospital is able to serve more patients this winter. Demand for heart care is "somewhat seasonal," but all hospitals see more patients in the winter, Harvey said.

"We take patients from all over the state, so we get a lot of transfers," he said. "If we opened in April, we would have missed the busiest times of the year and lost a season when we most need it."

A spokeswoman for the American Heart Association said unhealthy lifestyles among Oklahomans are resulting in rising rates of heart problems and driving the need for services. Oklahoma ranks No. 2 in the nation for the highest death rate from heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, according to the heart association.

Much work remains for Oklahoma

"While nationally, the American Heart Association has reached its 2010 Impact Goal of reducing cardiovascular disease death by 25 percent, much work still remains to be done in Oklahoma," stated Kim Cash, Oklahoma communications director for the American Heart Association. "Cardiovascular disease continues to be the No. 1 cause of death in our state, thus the continued need for facilities.

"It is our hope that our community will

See **HEART, back page**

Publication: The Oklahoman;Date: Aug 8, 2008;Section: Business;Page: 22

ActivePaper™

Heart

Continued from Page 1B

become more heart-healthy through the work we do at the heart association educating and bringing awareness to the risk factors and symptoms of this disease."

Technology also needed

Craig Jones, president of the Oklahoma Hospital Association, said the driver for new facilities is also found in technology advancements.

"Improved technology and advancement in treatment modalities are continuous in the health care field and a primary driver of new construction," Jones said. "Cardiac and surgical procedures, now associated with high-tech, non-invasive digital imaging, were once relegated only to academic medical centers. Over time, they have become the standard of care, even for small rural hospitals."

Oklahoma Heart Hospital is jointly owned by the Oklahoma Cardiovascular Associates, other physician investors and Sisters of Mercy Health System, which owns Mercy Hospital on the same campus at the intersection of Meridian Avenue and Memorial Road.



BY JIM STAFFORD, *THE OKLAHOMAN*

Dr. John Harvey, chief executive officer at Oklahoma Heart Hospital, is shown with the ongoing 70,000-square-foot, $30 million expansion in the background.

South campus planned

The same group along with other investors that include Midwest Regional Medical Center and Norman Regional Health System, is building a second heart hospital campus on the city's south side at Interstate 240 and Sooner Road.

The $75 million south campus will offer 46 beds in 120,000 square feet with the same look and feel as the north campus, Harvey said. The south campus is scheduled to open in the fall of 2009.

Oklahoma Heart Hospital was Oklahoma's first stand-alone heart specialty hospital. A spokeswoman for Integris Health on Thursday said that health care provider was investigating the possibility of building a stand-alone heart hospital. Integris Heart Hospital currently is a unit within Integris Baptist Medical Center.

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BY THE NUMBERS

Heart disease and risk factors

- Heart disease is the No. 1 killer in Oklahoma.
- In 2004, 11,061 Oklahomans died of heart disease.
- Stroke is the No. 3 killer in Oklahoma.
- In 2004, 2,485 Oklahomans died of stroke.
- Adults who are current smokers, Oklahoma, 25.1 percent ; U.S., 21 percent.
- Adults getting 20 minutes of physical activity three or more days a week, Oklahoma, 22.5 percent ; U.S., 27 percent.
- Obese adults, Oklahoma, 26.8 percent; U.S., 24 percent.
- Adults who eat fewer than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day, Oklahoma, 84.3 percent; U.S., 77 percent.

Source: American Heart Association

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New heart hospital 'unretires' architect

By Jim Stafford
Business Writer

Barry Bruce designed the Oklahoma Heart Hospital in 1998 and subsequently "retired" to a 20-acre property overlooking Lake Tenkiller to enjoy life near his children.

Then the Oklahoma Heart Hospital called the 72-year-old again.

When officials with Oklahoma Heart Hospital asked him first to draw up a 75,000-square-foot expansion of the hospital and then to repeat his hospital designs on a south campus near I-240 and Sooner Road, Bruce didn't hesitate to temporarily end his retirement.

On Monday, Bruce was among about 100 well wishers who gathered at the south Oklahoma City campus to celebrate the groundbreaking of the new hospital.

"We called him up when we started this expansion up north," said Dr. John Harvey, chief executive officer of Oklahoma Heart Hospital and master of ceremonies for Monday's ground-breaking. "We said, 'Barry, you have to help us with this.'"

An Oklahoma City native, Bruce designed the South Campus project in conjunction with WHR Architects, his former architectural firm in Houston before he retired and moved to eastern Oklahoma on land he bought that overlooks Lake Tenkiller.

At 120,000 square feet, the new $75 million South Campus hospital project will be a slightly smaller twin to the original Oklahoma Heart Hospital that opened five years ago. The new hospital is expected to open in the fall of 2009.

"We tried our darndest to make it as similar (to the original hospital) as we possibly could," Bruce said of the latest project.

The original hospital, on the Mercy Health Center campus, was the first Oklahoma hospital project

Bruce designed since designing the University Hospital not long after he graduated from Oklahoma State University in 1960.

"I was really excited about coming back and doing an important project in Oklahoma," Bruce said. "I knew I had a wonderful opportunity to do a really first-class hospital."

Before retiring in 2004, Bruce enjoyed a 33-year career in Houston and owned an architectural firm until merging it with WHR Architects in 1992. He has designed hospitals in 33 states and eight foreign countries.

But, with the Oklahoma Heart Hospital, the architect was able to produce a design that sort of broke the mold for hospitals and patient care. He created clusters of eight rooms surrounding a nurses' station that hospital officials call "pods."

"That was actually Barry's idea," Harvey said. "We had a pretty good concept when we were setting the thing up of how we wanted the work flow to happen. We knew we wanted certain nursing ratios and certainly wanted services for patients and their families to be close by."

Oklahoma Heart Hospital has

See **HOSPITAL, back page**

Publication: The Oklahoman; Date:2007 Nov 20; Section:Business; Page Number 26

ActivePaper™

Hospital

Continued from Page 1B

scored some of the nation's highest patient satisfaction ratings and staff ratings, which Bruce attributed to its patient- and staff-friendly design.

"As far as I know, there are no other nursing units like the one here at Oklahoma Heart (Hospital)," he said. "There have been a lot of people who go through there and feel like the design of those nursing units give it the feel of a ... high-class hotel because you don't see patients as you go up and down the hall; you don't hear a lot of activity.

"There is a higher initial cost, but the trade-off is what is it worth to you when you are No. 1 in the nation in customer satisfaction and what is it worth to you when you are No. 1 in the nation in staff satisfaction."

Monday's groundbreaking ceremony was highlighted by comments from Lt. Gov. Jari Askins, who said the new South Campus would provide access to quality health care to many more Oklahomans from around the state.

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BY JIM STAFFORD, THE OKLAHOMAN

Dr. John Harvey, left, chief executive officer of the Oklahoma Heart Hospital, with Barry Bruce, who designed the new hospital and its sister hospital on the campus of the Mercy Health Center in far northwest Oklahoma City. The two are standing in front of a drawing of the new hospital at a ground breaking ceremony on Monday at Interstate 240 and Sooner Road.

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Hospitals join forces for heart facility

By Jim Stafford
Business Writer

The Oklahoma Heart Hospital will break ground at 1:30 p.m. Monday on its $75 million south Oklahoma City campus, which has added multiple partners to the project.

Four metro Oklahoma City hospitals have teamed to build a 163,000-square-foot, all-digital facility totally dedicated to the treatment of hearts. Oklahoma Heart Hospital, Mercy Health Center, Midwest Regional Medical Center and Norman Regional Health System created a consortium to build the hospital, which will be located at I-240 and Sooner Road.

"The new hospital is jointly owned by Oklahoma Heart Hospital, 60 percent, 20 percent investment by Midwest Regional Medical Center, and 20 percent by Norman Regional Health System," said Dr. John Harvey, chief executive officer of Oklahoma Heart Hospital.

Oklahoma Heart Hospital is owned by Oklahoma Cardiovascular Associates, other physician investors and Sisters of Mercy Health System. The new hospital will include physician ownership though their investments in the respective partnership hospitals, Harvey said.

Opened five years ago, Oklahoma Heart Hospital experienced such an enormous demand for specialty heart care that it broke ground in September on its own $30 million, 70,000-square-foot expansion that will double the capacity of its emergency room, and add 16 in-patient beds and 10 day beds.

"We never envisioned that we would need a second hospital so quickly," Harvey said. "Southeast Oklahoma County is the ideal location to bring together cardiovascular specialists from Midwest City and Norman to serve this portion of Oklahoma City with the same commitment to patient care as the north campus."

It is the presence of potential competitor hospitals in the south campus partnership that makes the new hospital unique.

"They recognized the value of the brand — Oklahoma Heart Hospital — as providing quality care in this market and wanted to be part of that," Harvey said.

Added Doug Arnold, chief executive of Midwest Regional Medical Center, the consortium is the result of "good stewardship" on the part of the investing hospitals.

"What it came down to is it just made sense for all the patients to put the assets together," Arnold said. "I think there is some good stewardship behind this and good thought to combining assets to treat cardiovascular patients. I think it is going to make for a great network. We are jumping in with no reservations."

Each hospital will contribute heart specialists, including the Midwest Regional physicians who have done more than 250 "minimally invasive" surgical

See **HEART, back page**

Publication: The Oklahoman; Date:2007 Nov 17; Section:Business; Page Number 28

Heart

Continued from Page 1B

procedures using robotic surgical equipment, Arnold said.

The new hospital will employ "500 to 600" people, Harvey said.

The Oklahoma Heart Hospital South Campus will be a 46-bed facility with expansion capability to 62 beds. Three heart catheterization labs will be built, with additional space planned for a fourth. There will be two operating rooms with expansion capability for a third. The new hospital also will have 10 emergency room beds and 15 day beds.

"The need for excellent cardiovascular care will continue to be a focus for Norman Regional Health System," said David Whitaker, chief executive officer and president of Norman Regional Health System. "This partnership is a win-win for all. We have the opportunity to partner with some of the best hospitals in the state to provide top-notch health care to the Oklahomans we serve."

General contractor for the Oklahoma Heart Hospital South Campus is J.E. Dunn Construction Co. of Kansas City, Mo. Opening is scheduled for autumn of 2009, Harvey said.

THE JOURNAL RECORD

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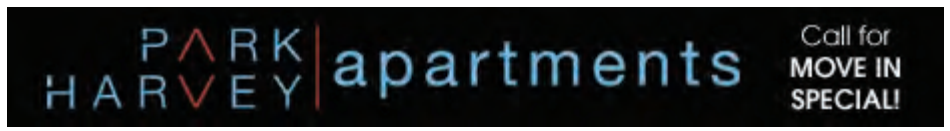
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Hospital credits rapid growth to focus on customer service

by Staci Elder Hensley
The Journal Record
4/11/2007



Journal Record Photo

OKLAHOMA CITY – As a pastor for more than 30 years, the Rev. Drue Freeman has been inside every medical facility in the Greater Oklahoma City area more times than he can count. Yet when he began having chest pains in 2005, there was only one hospital he considered entering.

"Two years ago, when I had a heart attack, I went immediately to the Oklahoma Heart Hospital," Freeman said. "I have known and visited many people who had been there since it opened, and the doctors and staff there always go the extra mile, not only to efficiently care for their patients, but also to keep them completely informed about the various procedures and treatments they are undergoing, and their level of progress."

Freeman's high opinion is shared by others treated at OHH, as reflected in the four-year-old hospital's consistent 99-percent patient satisfaction rate. Believed to be the nation's first all-digital hospital, it is the brainchild of Oklahoma Cardiovascular Associates, Oklahoma's largest group of practicing cardiologists. Their outline for the hospital included advances such as faster patient processing, state-of-the-art treatments, more nurses, less moving of patients from room to room, a paperless record system, and an atmosphere that focused on the patient's needs and comfort.

The hospital, adjacent to Mercy Health Center in far north Oklahoma City, has consistently ranked in the nation's top 1 percent in patient satisfaction since opening in fall of 2002. The rankings are established by Press Ganey Associates Inc., a health care satisfaction measurement and improvement firm, based on patient surveys. Press Ganey ranks 1,800 hospitals nationally, including 39 in Oklahoma. Only one other Oklahoma hospital ranked in the top 3 percent nationally; the remaining 37 were in the 70s or below.

The business has been so successful that plans are under way to

build a second heart hospital on 25 acres near Interstate 240 and Sooner Road. At the same time, a $25 million expansion project will add 70,000 square feet to the original 240,000-square-foot hospital. Planned are an additional 21 beds, a larger emergency room, meeting space and clinical space for OCA doctors.

“This is an extraordinary achievement, and puts us among the best of the best,” said Dr. John Harvey, CEO of the Oklahoma Heart Hospital and cardiologist with Oklahoma Cardiovascular Associates. “Physicians can refer their patients to the Oklahoma Heart Hospital with the utmost confidence they will receive attentive and responsive care second to none anywhere in the United States.”

The hospital’s growth rate has been a steady 10 percent per year. The staff performs approximately 1,200 open heart surgeries, 1,000 peripheral vascular surgeries, 2,500 catheter-based interventions, 600 pacemaker installations and 400 defibrillator procedures annually. Patients are accepted for treatment regardless of their insurance status or their ability to pay.

“While there are many factors in any success story, I think the patient satisfaction, which has been in the 99th percentile every week since we opened, is most responsible for the growth,” Harvey said. “We believe that we have set a new paradigm for patient care; one that puts what is best for the patient at the center of all decisions, be it nurse staffing ratios, building design, paperless electronic hospital records, food services, open visitation hours, etc. We feel that once a patient has been cared for at our hospital, that they will never want to go anyplace else.”

Patients have an average wait of only 90 minutes from arrival at the emergency room to surgery 25 percent less than the national average of more than two hours. The hospital provides portable heart monitors that travel room to room with the patient, continuously tracking their blood pressure and heart rate, but not restricting mobility.

The hospital also boasts a maximum of four patients to one nurse. It’s not uncommon to find a much higher ratio nationally at most health care facilities, Harvey said. In addition, Oklahoma Heart Hospital has 1-to-2 and 1-to-1 nurse-to-patient ratios in the critical care unit and 1-to-1 for heart recovery.

A 1-to-4 nurse-to-patient ratio is the standard of excellence set by the American Nursing Association, said Cindy Miller, RN, OHH’s research and development director.

“When a hospital has a 1-to-5 ratio or anything above, you start seeing medication errors, patient falls and infection rates rise,” she said. “What we provide at OHH is very rare.”

Harvey’s and Miller’s claims are backed by several studies profiled in The Journal of the American Medical Association and Health Affairs. Hospitals could avoid 6,700 deaths per year by increasing the number of RNs directly attending patients, according to one study; another found that a surgical patient’s overall risk of death rose 7 percent for each additional patient above four added to a nurse’s workload. Further, a 2002 Joint Commission on the Accreditation of HealthCare Organizations study found that nursing shortages contribute to nearly a quarter of all unexpected incidents that kill or injure hospitalized patients.

When it comes to nursing care, Oklahoma Heart Hospital has the highest nursing scores reported nationwide, according to Press Ganey Associates Inc. It is also among the nation's leaders in everything from physician scores to patients' satisfaction with the rooms, including room cleanliness, noise level and room décor.

All OHH inpatients receive a survey.

"What our patients think makes a difference to us," Miller said. "We look at every survey to see what our patients are telling us. It drives how we serve them, and we make immediate changes."

As one example, the hospital responded to patient feedback by instituting the Needle Stick Hotline to ensure patients receive as few needle sticks as possible.

"Sometimes it's difficult to find a suitable vein, and patients have to put up with a lot of sticks as nurses try to place an IV or draw blood," Miller said. "When we have a patient at OHH whose veins might be difficult to locate, we have a team of people who are highly skilled at IV placement and are on-call at any time to provide assistance."

Steps like the hotline ensure better care, Harvey said. "Being patient-focused is our mission, and meeting patients' needs means being creative with solutions to their problems. Our focus is the very reason we are leading the nation in patient satisfaction."

"I can't say enough about how I was treated," said heart patient Lisa Sykes. "We went there because I had a heart scan and other tests done, and my husband wouldn't go anyplace else. The thing that impressed me the most was how quickly they did the tests and got the results back. I was out of there in just a few hours, yet I felt very calm about the situation. Everyone took the time to explain what tests they were doing and why, which takes a lot of the anxiety out of the experience."

Freeman agreed.

"The Oklahoma Heart Hospital is without question the best hospital I have been around," he said. "Others should find out how they do things and copy them."

Oklahoma Heart Hospital expanding into south OKC

Building on the overwhelming success of the original, a second Oklahoma Heart Hospital is planned on 25 acres near I-240 and Sooner Road. The two-story, $75 million facility will serve doctors and patients in south and southeast Oklahoma City and beyond. Its amenities will include:

- Sixty-two in-patient beds.
- Two operating rooms.
- Three heart catheter labs.
- A 12-bed emergency room.
- A 16-bed day patient unit.

- Use of the same all-digital computerized system now in place at the Oklahoma Heart Hospital.

Architectural plans are in development for the new hospital. Groundbreaking is scheduled for this fall, and construction should take an estimated 20 to 24 months. Investors include Mercy Health System, the Oklahoma Cardiovascular Associates and numerous physicians in private practice. Other hospitals have been invited to invest as well; but no agreements have yet been signed, according to Dr. John Harvey, Oklahoma Heart Hospital CEO.

“We are extremely excited about this project,” Harvey said. “It’s our chance to continue and extend the high level of care that the Oklahoma Heart Hospital is known for.”

– Staci Elder Hensley

[go to home page] [previous page]

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