

Governor proposes two sites for new mental health facilities

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Governor Sends Legislature Site Evaluation Recommendations for Replacement of Oregon State Hospital; Proposes 620-bed facility in Salem, 360-bed facility in Junction City

SALEM, Ore. — Today Governor Ted Kulongoski delivered to the Oregon Legislature recommendations for the location of two new state mental health facilities — a 620-bed hospital on the existing site in Salem and a 360-bed hospital in Junction City — to replace the outdated Oregon State Hospital and improve the lives of Oregonians with mental illness. — This initiative represents the most significant opportunity in more than 120 years to improve the quality of mental health care Oregonians receive at our state hospitals, — said Governor Kulongoski. — As we move forward this critical initiative focused on construction of new state psychiatric hospitals, we must also remain focused on a vision of a truly transformed Oregon mental health system. —

In selecting the sites, the state used criteria developed by a 10-member committee named in June 2006 by the Governor, Senate President and Speaker of the House. Those criteria focused on three themes: 1) the opportunity to deliver high quality services to patients closest to their home communities; 2) the ability to retain and recruit the best professionals available to care for patients and deliver those high quality services; and 3) cost, focusing on estimated construction costs and the value of the investment to the state. — I look forward to working with the Legislature to advance the recommendations in this report this session because this issue cannot wait another two years for action, — the Governor said. — Resolution on the location for these two new facilities before the legislature adjourns this summer is critical both to the state’s community mental health system planning efforts and, most importantly, to the state’s ability to better serve Oregonians with mental health needs in our state-owned hospital facilities. —

Construction of these facilities is critical to moving forward Phase III of a multi-phase process the Governor launched in 2004 to redesign Oregon’s mental health system, including a new State Hospital system. That intensive planning process, detailed in the — Master Plan Phase I Report — and the — Oregon State Hospital Framework Master Plan Phase II Report — — was led by KMD Architects of San Francisco. The Phase I Report identified the structural and systemic challenges facing the Oregon State Hospital’s Salem Campus and concluded that Oregon should proceed with both the replacement of the Hospital facility and a redesign of the entire public mental health system. Building on those findings, the Phase II Report recommended enhancing Oregon’s delivery of mental health care to its citizens at the community level and clarified the role that the Oregon State Hospital system should have within an improved and enhanced community-based system. The Governor’s recommended budget takes significant steps to advance the mission of the next phase, namely, to create an integrated, culturally competent continuum of mental health treatment and support services designed to help individuals avoid disruptive and costly hospitalization in the first place, offer the highest quality community and state hospital-level services, and help individuals transition back into their communities when hospitalization is unavoidable. Community services in the Governor’s budget include: improved access to phone counseling and — crisis — services; more out-patient and residential treatment; and more employment and housing supports for individuals with mental illness. The Governor’s budget also includes the necessary funding to perform a more detailed assessment (— due diligence —) of both the Salem and Junction City properties, and to design and begin construction on the 620-bed hospital facility, with completion of that facility scheduled for 2011. The 360-bed facility would be completed by 2013. The focus of today’s report is on the two larger facilities west of the Cascades recommended in the Phase II report. Separate efforts are underway to address the unique needs of central and eastern Oregon. Another separate effort detailing recommendations about community-based mental health service needs is also ongoing. Both of those efforts will produce additional reports at a later date.

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