

MEETING FUTURE PATIENT NEEDS



Submitted photo

Scottsdale Healthcare's recent rezoning request to expand its downtown Scottsdale medical campus will give the health care giant flexibility to meet future patient needs as the city's population continues to grow and age.

Scottsdale hospital seeks rezoning

By Zach Colick

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Scottsdale Healthcare's recent rezoning request to expand its downtown Scottsdale medical campus gives the health care giant flexibility to meet future patient needs as the city's population continues to grow and age, say hospital officials.

While people of all ages will constantly require medical care of some kind, identifying those exact needs 10 to 20 years down the road is a whole different ballgame.

A few things are for sure: medical technology is advancing all the time, and the general public will get older and sick. Scottsdale Healthcare officials are preparing now for the future.

"We want to be in a position to add the services, and make the investment in the talent and technology that's going to be

needed to meet the community's needs," said Keith Jones, Scottsdale Healthcare spokesman.

Scottsdale Healthcare's rezoning request, which was recently submitted to the city of Scottsdale's planning department, is intended to accommodate a 20-year development plan at Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn, 7400 E. Osborn Road, that could include construction of two patient towers, a new main entrance, as well as additional parking and medical offices.

Mr. Jones stressed that hospital officials have not identified any plans for expanding the 44.6-acre medical campus, but noted the rezoning request simply allows hospital officials more flexibility to better forecast a potential long-range plan for future patient medical needs and services.

Scottsdale Planner Tim Curtis said hos-

pital officials submitted their master plan update last month as part of a rezoning request, allowing Scottsdale Healthcare to become zoned as a special campus zoning district.

Mr. Curtis said city staff just started the review process, so hearing schedules, and reports and recommendations have not yet been assembled. No specific building plans have been submitted pertaining to their master plan update.

Because hospital construction tends to occur upward, Mr. Jones said construction of a new patient tower at the 47-year-old medical campus is something Scottsdale Healthcare may pursue as it makes the most sense, he said.

"Hospitals have really unique operating characteristics. We can't be spread out all

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over campus since that's not conducive to facilitating good patient care," he said. "For operational efficiency, we tend to build upward in some cases. That's really what the rezoning request would allow."

Plans could also call for expanding the hospital's surgical suite units by adding new operating rooms. Currently, Scottsdale

Healthcare Osborn houses eight surgical suites. Future expansion plans could include the construction of two to three additional suites.

Additionally, the goal is to provide patients with all private rooms in a proposed new hospital tower. Patients currently share rooms with another patient.

Allowing more space for patients could also mean hiring more employees, meaning the city's largest employer, with 6,555 workers, could see an influx of new employees, ensuring the Valley's health care industry

will sustain itself in the next two decades.

The rezoning request would allow Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn to build up to 120 feet at the center of the campus and 75 feet on the perimeter, according to the city. Currently, the hospital is licensed for 337 beds. Expansion depends on demand for new facilities.

Besides expanding facilities at Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn, Mr. Jones said allowing for better patient access to and from the immediate area is vitally important.

Scottsdale Healthcare, recently acquired the former Scottsdale Main Post Office as part of its future expansion plans. Its plan is designed to make the area more pedestrian-friendly.