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Sanford announces changes to new medical center

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By: Kevin Wallevand, WDAY



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The hospital today announced it will build higher, but on a smaller base because of soil at the building site just off Veterans Boulevard. The new hospital has a smaller budget, now set at nearly \$500 million.

Engineers faced the same issue 5 years ago when the overpass went in on Veterans Boulevard. This time, the problem has forced Sanford to make significant changes.

Dennis Millirons – Sanford President: "The soil here has been described to me as a bowl of Jell-O. It doesn't have a lot of structure to it."

It is too cold to dig and build right now, but when Sanford begins putting up its 1 million square foot medical center, it will be higher than planned and not as wide. The reason? Soil.

Dennis Millirons: "When you go down about a hundred feet, you would expect to find bedrock. Well, you do not find bedrock here. Instead you find sort of a gravelly structure that you have to use either cement caissons with large bell at the bottom or steel pilings to stabilize buildings."

With a smaller footprint, it means fewer hospital beds in the new facility, but more hospital beds and more action for the downtown campus.

Dr. Richard Marsden – Sanford Executive VP: "The net effect of this is going from a number of beds in the low 500's at the new facility before. Realizing that 380 there and another 250-300 downtown ends up to be a bigger number and allows us to adjust for growth going forward."

Orthopedic Surgery will move out of South University building and out to the new medical center. Roger Marris Cancer, family birth, neo-natal intensive care and a handful of other clinic services will stay at the downtown campus, which will receive a multi-million dollar facelift.

Dr. Richard Marsden: "The fact that there will be a significant facility downtown, I think it is important to downtown Fargo."

Sanford announced today the architectural firm hired to design the new medical center is the same firm designing the new Vikings Stadium.

While the main trauma center will move out here to the new medical center, downtown will still have a large walk in clinic.

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