

OU plans to expand medical campus

■ The \$120 million planned cancer institute will combine research with patient care.

By Beth Gollob
Staff Writer

Expansion of one of the state's largest medical campuses could mean as much as \$1.48 billion in construction during the next 15 years, according to a master plan released recently by Oklahoma Health Center officials.

"If you look at every one of the major cities in America, ev-

ery one of them has a vibrant medical teaching center complex. I believe we have an opportunity to become one of the nation's best," said Dr. Dewayne Andrews, University of Oklahoma executive dean of the College of Medicine and vice president for Health Affairs.

Situated near NE 13 and Lin-

coln Boulevard, the Oklahoma Health Center campus includes clinical, academic and research areas such as the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, OU Medical Center and the Presbyterian Health Foundation Research Park.

Officials from a variety of organizations on the campus

spent thousands of hours developing the plan for campus expansion to help meet the health needs of Oklahomans.

Officials anticipate growth of more than 4.75 million square feet during the next 15 years.

Some property acquisition would be necessary if expansion goes as planned, but resi-

dential properties would not be affected, said Hershel Lami-rand, executive director of the Oklahoma Health Center Foundation.

Where possible, empty areas would be filled and higher den-

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sity buildings would replace older campus structures, according to the plan.

Construction would start in the next few years for major research and treatment centers for diabetes and cancer.

The \$120 million OU Cancer Institute is planned to compete with comprehensive cancer centers in other states, combining top-notch research with patient care.

About 38 comprehensive cancer centers exist in the U.S., Andrews said.

"Many of our patients leave Oklahoma to go to M.D. Anderson (Cancer Center of the University of Texas, Houston) and other places, so that's why we're trying to get this here in Oklahoma," he said.

The 220,000-square-foot, seven-story building would be built at NE 10 and Phillips Avenue and cost about \$120 million. Construction is to start this year, with a grand opening in about two years.

The building would include two proton therapy vaults, four photon therapy machines and research and family-oriented features, he said.

Named for donors Harold and Sue Ann Hamm of Enid, the Hamm Oklahoma Diabetes Center would be one of only five or six like it in the nation.

"Our conception is this center will be as critical to diabetes research and care as a comprehensive cancer center would be," he said.

The project still is in the early stages of planning and design, but officials hope to start construction next year.

Tribal leaders and other groups have supported the center as a way to fight the rising problem of diabetes in Oklahoma, Andrews said.

Traffic long has been a problem on the congested campus, which shares main arteries with the State Capitol complex.

Nearby Bricktown and downtown areas also add to traffic tie-ups.

In addition to numerous patients and visitors to the area, about 16,000 employees and students use the area each day.

Planners intend to work with Oklahoma City officials to seek additional exits from Interstate 235, street upgrades, and signal improvements.

To help reduce traffic, alter-

native public transportation would be considered, such as expanded shuttle service and bus routes, walking and biking trails and connection to a possible light rail system.

Oklahoma Health Center Foundation officials will review

the plan as it moves along, with a formal evaluation scheduled for 2009 or 2010.

"We're really excited about it, and we're excited about the future. I think we're on the cusp of transforming events out here," Andrews said.