



Legacy Colleagues:

Today, the region is one step closer to a new model of care for people having a psychiatric emergency and for inpatient mental health treatment. Adventist Health, Kaiser Permanente, Legacy Health and Oregon Health & Science University have all signed a Joint Operating Agreement (JOA) to proceed with the formation of the new ***Unity Center for Behavioral Health***.

In February, the four major healthcare providers came together and signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) to create the region's largest non-profit hospital focused on behavioral health. The JOA outlines specifically how Unity Center will be managed and operated, and outlines the financial and clinical management of the new organization. With the signed JOA, work can now begin to create the space to house the Unity Center and to begin to bring physicians and staff onboard.

Since the signing of the LOI, over 20 physician-led design groups have been realizing the vision of Unity Center for Behavioral Health. These design groups cover every aspect of the patient journey, including such things as patient experience, clinical care and building design. There are other operational planning groups that have started developing plans that cover areas from information technology to staffing. This work is expected to continue over the next year.

Preliminary work on the design of the new facility has included working with community members and patient advocates to ensure the design will contribute to the healing process. Space within the building will include an area for community-based support groups to help transition patients upon discharge.

Each year in Oregon, an estimated 1 in 20 adults experience a serious mental illness and 31,000 adolescents suffer a major depressive episode that often leads to other social issues. Untreated mental illness is common among the prison population both nationally and locally. The Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) has determined that more than half of Oregon's prison population has been diagnosed with a mental illness.

As the first behavioral health center of its kind in the region, the Unity Center for Behavioral Health is expected to become a national model for providing compassionate mental health care in times of crisis, without unnecessary waiting. This unprecedented collaboration of four health systems shares the goal of providing care for all those in need through a combination of emergency, inpatient and robust transition to outpatient services and embraces the concepts of hope, recovery and resilience.

The Unity Center will include 79 adult patient beds and 22 beds for adolescents and will also house organizations that provide community behavioral health services, helping to coordinate continued support to patients after discharge.

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