



From John O'Brien
April 11, 2012

Building while reducing costs

I've written to you recently about our need to become more affordable for our patients. As part of our ***Inspired Change Initiative***, efforts are underway across our system to get this done. Thank you for helping out.

A related question that reaches me regularly is "To reduce costs, why don't we stop building and renovating?" It's a great question.

The changing health care landscape requires us to reassess what we will be for our community and how we deliver care to patients. Our strategic plan is guiding us in this work. As you'll recall, the plan has four goals:

- Pursuing high-quality, patient-centered, safe care
- Integrating care across our system
- Ensuring we are financially stable
- Growing the number of patients we serve

With the goals of our strategic plan in mind, it is easy to turn around the question about building and ask "How can we afford NOT to do construction projects?" Although terrifically expensive, expanding and updating our facilities is central to our ability to achieve our strategic goals and, importantly, our UMass Memorial Health Care [mission](#).

For example, we have two big projects underway to bring the care of our Cancer Center of Excellence to more patients. One is an expansion of our Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center at HealthAlliance Hospital. The other is at Marlborough Hospital where we recently broke ground for a Cancer Pavilion. Both include new linear accelerators for radiation oncology, each costing about \$ 3 million. Both projects include constructing new patient care spaces. All in all, the price tag on these projects is in excess of \$ 25 million.

To fund projects like these it is important for us to have a year-end margin and to be financially stable enough to borrow money. The importance of taking on this expense is clear when we put ourselves in the place of our patients. We'd want the most advanced technology if we were battling cancer. We'd want to get that care close to home in surroundings that are bright, comfortable and comforting. By making this level of care available – particularly in the community hospital setting where providing care can often be

Our Inspired Change Initiative

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Doing this right will ensure quality and affordability for patients, financial sustainability for our system, and an organization where staff members are engaged and perform to their highest potential.

To achieve this we must each be open to new ways of doing our work.

While we've made many changes already, we will increase the pace over the coming months.

Your partnership is critical for success.

less costly than at our Medical Center – we are achieving all our strategic goals: high quality care, integrating care across our system, building patient numbers and contributing to our financial stability.

Another project underway is the build out of a new primary care office in West Boylston for our Community Medical Group. We know that the future of health care will bring an increasing emphasis by payors on rewarding physicians and hospitals for keeping patients well. While accountable care organizations and patient-centered medical homes are still emerging models of care, they may soon be the norm. Spending our precious dollars on developing our primary care network not only helps us fulfill our mission today but also prepares us for what we see on the horizon of health care delivery.

We have several other construction projects underway, including a new Radiology Department on our Medical Center University Campus, a new ED at our Clinton Hospital, and a new Psychiatric Treatment Center on our Worcester City Campus. A summary of all these projects will be in tomorrow's *Inspired Change* e-newsletter.

A final thought: We need to quicken our pace of change to respond to the ever-increasing pressures of the marketplace. To achieve this we must each be open to new ways of doing our work. Some of our focus will be on growth, building and expansion of services and technology. Some of our focus will be on efficiency, cost reduction and downsizing of our current services.

Doing this right will ensure quality and affordability for patients, financial sustainability for our system, and an organization where staff members are engaged and perform to their highest potential.

Thank you for taking part ... and for offering your thoughts by writing to communications@umassmemorial.org.