

Lakewood Sun Post Editorial

Making a Commitment to the Future...

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Lakewood Hospital is on the move once again. This time, hospital officials are undertaking an ambitious plan that should help position the 102-year-old institution for future growth and long-term stability.

The "Vision for Tomorrow" calls for converting every patient room in the hospital into a private room, beginning this year. Other facets include focusing on geriatrics, orthopedics, neurological services and diabetes, which are identified as Lakewood Hospital's four "centers of excellence." There also will be an expansion of outpatient care, partnerships with community organizations to maximize wellness offerings, strengthening management of chronic diseases such as diabetes, and aligning Cleveland Clinic services and community physicians into the hospital.

It will take a great deal of time and money to implement this enormous undertaking, which is labeled as one of the largest in the institution's history, but hospital officials say it can -- and will -- be done. The hospital's medical staff demonstrated its commitment to the project with a \$500,000 gift and the Lakewood Hospital Foundation pledged \$5 million to make the vision a reality.

Jack Gustin, Lakewood Hospital president, said private rooms are a hot commodity at health care institutions. Every survey -- physician, patient and family -- points to private rooms as a major issue, which is why the hospital will make the conversion. Health care professionals said private rooms also can help patients recover more quickly.

Other segments of the plan include building an eight-bed Acute Care for the Elderly Unit, enhancing the endovascular suite, making improvements to the parking garage and beginning the replacement of the heating and cooling system.

Lakewood Hospital is the city's largest employer. Although the city still owns the facility, the Cleveland Clinic has a long-term lease. As a part of that lease and its commitment to the community, the Clinic continues to make improvements and upgrades at the hospital.

Lakewood residents, as well as others who choose the community hospital, are fortunate to have top-notch health care conveniently available in the community. Fred DeGrandis, CEO of the Cleveland Clinic Regional Hospitals, who started his career at Lakewood Hospital some 30 years ago, said this project will help turn the facility into a 21st Century health care institution.

We wish the best to hospital officials as they undertake this major endeavor that undoubtedly will help Lakewood Hospital cement its position as a major player in the health care industry for many years to come.

To learn more about *Vision for Tomorrow*, visit lakewoodhospital.org