

St. Francis Memorial Hospital

News Release

St. Francis Memorial Hospital receives green light for major expansion

On Tuesday September 8, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced final approval for capital funding of \$9,655,200 towards the cost of St. Francis Memorial Hospital's expansion.

Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke MPP John Yakabuski, who was on hand for the announcement, noted that the redevelopment project and the ask for it has been ongoing for a number of years. Stating that SFMH emergency department has seen its annual visits more than double since it was last redeveloped in 1986, he said, "This was absolutely needed. So for the province to be able to provide just under \$10 million for this project is something I was very pleased to receive the word from the Honourable Christine Elliott, our Minister of Health, when she approved the project."

We are thrilled to move forward in the process, said Joanne King, SFMH Board Chair. "This project represents the largest ever investment in SFMH since the construction of the hospital. The expansion and revitalization of our hospital will ensure the continued delivery of high-quality health care now and in the future. The project is the culmination of tremendous foresight, a very strong management/medical team and a solid financial base. These are the dividends you can realize with a well-supported hospital."

"On behalf of our hospital and most importantly our patients and their families, I would like to thank the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Health for this very significant investment in our hospital," stated Julia Boudreau, CEO of St. Francis Memorial Hospital. "I would also like to thank John Yakabuski for his unwavering commitment to this project."

The expansion plans include a 5,000 square foot addition to the emergency department, and a major redevelopment of the outpatient clinical service area. Patients, staff and physicians will benefit from more space, improved health and safety, visual sight-lines for safety, LEAN considerations for patient and work flow, patient-centred design, enhanced infection control, privacy and confidentiality.

The St. Francis Memorial Hospital Emergency Department is our most important clinical service to our community. The distance to secondary facilities is well over an hour in each direction. As the only Emergency Department between Pembroke and Huntsville, SFMH sees more than 11,000 visits a year, accounting for 63% of patient interactions with the hospital.

The newly built emergency department will be attached and connected to the existing hospital building, and will offer a dedicated, convenient entrance, with a separate waiting room. Non-emergency visits will continue to access the hospital through the main entrance.

Once completed, the expansion project will include a dedicated isolation room with negative air pressure, an ambulance entrance, dedicated space for mental health and a large communications desk with views of patient spaces. The trauma area will be upgraded to ensure the hospital's ability to respond to all emergencies. All spaces will be designed to meet the changes required with our electronic health record.

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“The doctors and nurses on our clinical team have looked at this project multiple times over the past few years, benchmarking with our peers, and continuously refining the plan in preparation for opening day. We’ve worked and lived in the current department long enough that we’ve developed a solid design for things that would make an ER visit much better for everyone involved—patients, families, and hospital staff ” said Dr. Jason Malinowski, Chief of Staff.

Dr. Malinowski continued, “With this project, we are aiming to strategically position ourselves well, not only for present needs, but also for future considerations, as we estimate the patient numbers and complexity in ER only growing in the coming years.”

The ambulatory rooms (telemedicine, medical procedures, specialist clinic rooms) will move to the front of the building. Clinical Records and the Registration desk will move to serve both the new emergency space and all other visits. There are more than 6,000 ambulatory care visits per year at SFMH.

Dorothy Corbeil, a principal member of the Patient and Family Advisory Council shared that, “As a senior citizen who lives in the area, I very much appreciate having St. Francis Memorial Hospital nearby and available when I need it. And I *have* needed it, as have some members of my family. The care is outstanding and now, with these much-needed changes to the physical layout, the experience of us who find ourselves having to go to the hospital, especially to the Emergency Department, will be even better. Thank you to all who have worked hard to get these improvements!”

“Over the years, numerous individuals at the Capital Branch of the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health and at the Champlain LHIN were of great assistance moving this project forward and our board, staff and physicians have been preparing for this investment for some time. I am grateful for their efforts. SFMH will undergo the largest transformation in its history over the course of this project in order to ensure that the hospital can continue to meet the healthcare needs of the community,” noted Randy Penney former CEO of St. Francis Memorial.

Boudreau added “At the completion of this project, we will be able to offer the community high-quality services, enhanced ambulatory care clinics with the ability to attract additional physicians and practitioners, and modernized facilities. I would like to thank our staff, our architect, Brian Dickey, and our engineers for all of their assistance with the work to date. Brian has once again designed a beautiful facility that this community will be so very proud of.”

“I would echo Julia’s comments and express our appreciation to the province of Ontario for this investment,” said King. “This is all about our future, and the future of SFMH is very, very bright.”