Sharp and Kaiser Are Putting Big Construction Plans Into Action

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San Diego — Construction projects planned by two local health care systems are promising to bring a major economic stimulus jolt to the San Diego region this year.

Sharp HealthCare, a not-for-profit, integrated regional health care delivery system, and Kaiser Permanente San Diego, a nonprofit integrated managed care system, say they have a series of projects set to go.

Clearly, the most significant in terms of expenditures is the estimated $325 million Kaiser is plowing back into three of its campuses. The majority of funding comes from premiums the company charges on its health plan side, said spokesman Rodger W. Dougherty. Members will be pleased with the upgrades to services as a result of the construction and investment in infrastructure, he said.

Sharp is looking to shine in the area of cancer treatment. On Jan. 27, Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center will break ground on a $15 million, 45,000-square-foot Cancer Center and Medical Office Plaza.

The facility will be built by Makena Medical Buildings Chula Vista LLC. It will be located behind the main hospital, adjacent to the Outpatient Surgery Center (765 Medical Center Court), which opened in 2001. The project will be funded through system revenue and philanthropy. Sharp officials have tentatively scheduled the facilitys opening for spring 2012.

The facility will be staffed by radiation therapy employees who currently work on the first floor of the hospital, as well as the employees at Sharp Chula Vistas infusion center. In terms of hiring additional staff, hospital officials arent making any projections at this time.

The new facility is being built to keep pace with the health care needs of the Chula Vista community, said a hospital executive.

Providing patients with the best possible cancer care has always been a priority of

ours, said Pablo Velez, senior vice president and chief executive officer of Sharp Chula Vista.

The centerpiece of the facility, the Cancer Center, will be located on the first of its three floors and feature stereotactic radiosurgery, image-guided radiation therapy, intensity-modulated radiation therapy and TrueBeam, which is described as more powerful and accurate than any other radiotherapy technology currently available,

Indeed, Sharp Chula Vista, a 343-bed hospital, is expected to be the first hospital in San Diego to offer TrueBeam treatment, Velez said. Another focal point of the facility will be its design, featuring touches such as a private entrance for patients, a fireplace in the lobby, indoor and outdoor healing gardens and soothing colors and sounds.

The Cancer Centers radiation treatment room will be one of the few in the U.S. to offer floor-to-ceiling windows with views of a landscaped tree garden and decorative rock walls with direct natural sunlight. The hospitals infusion center and physician offices will be located on its second and third floors, respectively.

As we planned the Cancer Center and the Medical Office Plaza, we thought about what we would want for ourselves and our loved ones, Velez said. We would want the best technology, a comforting environment and easy access to services, so thats what our patients will have.

In 2011, Kaiser Permanente plans to tackle projects at its Garfield Specialty Care Center, San Marcos Medical Office campus, and at the San Diego Medical Center.

At Garfield, which is located at 5893 Copley Drive in Kearny Mesa, the final phase of ongoing construction will be completed in May and will add ambulatory surgery services to the facility, including four new operating rooms. The estimated cost is $111 million. A total of 58 physicians will be practicing at Garfield when it is fully completed, a Kaiser spokesman said. About 1,100 physicians in the San Diego region are affiliated with Kaiser.

Kaiser will also break ground in April on a fourth building at its San Marcos campus that will comprise 67,200 square feet, a project that is budgeted at $64 million. The structure will house 34 doctors and an ambulatory surgery center along with four new operating rooms. The building site, at 400 Craven Road, is scheduled to be completed in 2012.

In 2011, planned upgrades to the San Diego Medical Center at 4647 Zion Ave. will carry a price tag of $150 million. About one-third of this amount will go toward maternal-child area upgrades. Kaiser plans to add private patient rooms in the maternal/child areas of the hospital, including antepartum and postpartum care, and the neonatal intensive care unit.

Kaisers San Diego Medical Center has also been building its reputation. It was just recognized as a Baby Friendly Hospital by Baby-Friendly USA Inc., a global program sponsored by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Childrens Fund,

aka Unicef. With more than 5,000 births locally in 2010, KP San Diego supports breast-feeding to promote infant health.

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Investigating Origins of Liver Disease: Researchers at the UC San Diego School of Medicine are helping to advance a greater understanding of how liver disease develops, according to a Dec. 17 announcement. With colleagues in Austria and elsewhere, they have presented new theories of how fibrotic cells form, multiply and eventually destroy the human liver. The end result is cirrhosis, the 12th leading cause of death by disease in the U.S. with roughly 27,000 deaths annually. The new research challenges some of the prevailing assumptions about the disease and opens the door to new avenues of investigation, according to David Brenner, vice chancellor for health sciences and dean at the School of Medicine. Brenner is co-author of the paper, which appears in the publication Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

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Leader for Staffing Group Divisions: On the health care staffing front, The Eastridge Group of Staffing Cos. announced Dec. 22 that William Stone will run two of its flagship divisions: TheraStaff LLC and Medical Resources Staffing Services. According to an announcement, Stone has more than 30 years of experience in the medical staffing industry, and has been serving as TheraStaffs president. Founded in 1972, Eastridge is a privately held staffing company based in San Diego with locations in six states and 25,000 employee placements annually.

Send health care news of general interest to Steve Sinovic via e-mail at ssinovic@sdbj.com. He can be reached at 858-277-6897.

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