



PRESS RELEASE

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UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL SELECTS ARCHITECTURE FIRM GENSLER TO CREATE NEW HOSPITAL MASTER PLAN

NEWARK, NJ – University Hospital (UH), the State’s only public hospital, announced today that it has awarded a contract to create a master plan for a new hospital to Gensler, a global architecture, design, and planning firm with 49 locations across Asia, Europe, Australia, the Middle East, and the Americas.

This announcement is the latest step in a process that began with the pledge of \$500,000 from the State of New Jersey’s Fiscal Year 2022 budget to support planning efforts for a new hospital campus; one that would not only bring new facilities, but also serve as a modern, transformative investment into the health of residents in Greater Newark. That pledge was announced in mid-April 2021 by New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver and other state and local officials.

“As we move forward in our recovery from COVID-19, we cannot lose sight of the critical role that our health care system plays in the state. That is why Governor Murphy’s budget includes significant quality of life investments to help make New Jersey a healthier place to live for all our residents,” said **Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs in announcing the study’s funding last April.** “This proposed funding for University Hospital, for a study to explore a new plan and design for its physical campus here in Newark, is going to help address the hospital’s needs and allow it to improve the delivery of care that our communities so heavily rely on, especially as we endure this pandemic.”

“First and foremost, the Newark Accords called for us to provide high quality, equitable health care for people in Newark and Essex County,” said **Shereef Elnahal, MD, MBA, President and CEO of University Hospital.** “The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the growing primary care needs of our community, a community that was disproportionately impacted by every adverse health outcome in this pandemic. As a result we have never been busier meeting the growing health needs of our community, and our patients and families deserve a large investment into the infrastructure of their hospital to serve them. This will not be another ivory tower — it will be designed with and for the Greater Newark community, and use the best of technology to meet that demand.”

The selection of Gensler comes after a competitive selection process from qualified firms to provide professional planning services for the development of a campus redesign. UH will use the master plan as a guide for the preservation, adaptation, refurbishment and potential redevelopment of all current facilities, as well as the identification of new facilities to collectively enhance and optimize space utilization to meet the healthcare needs of the community for the next decade and beyond.

“This isn’t just an opportunity to help University Hospital plan for the future of their existing facilities,” said **James Crispino, Principal and Healthcare Leader at Gensler.** “It is an opportunity to further define

a longstanding anchor institution for health and advanced medical care for the Greater Newark community.”

The current 519-bed University Hospital, which opened in 1979, has been relying on its aging infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the community it serves without any major capital investment since first opening its doors. UH is the principal teaching hospital of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and New Jersey Dental School, and any other Newark-based medical education program. UH serves as both an anchor institution and a safety-net hospital for the city of Newark and its surrounding communities. In 2021, University Hospital handled over 83,000 emergency department visits, more than 15,500 inpatient admissions, and nearly 200,000 outpatient clinic visits. As the only State-designated Level 1 Trauma Center for Northern New Jersey, revolutionizing and expanding the facilities would allow UH to deliver comprehensive care for its patients. UH also operates the Rutgers Health at University Hospital Ambulatory Care Center, which includes in its operations both primary and specialty clinics. In addition, University Hospital is affiliated with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

The new master plan will address the driving issues and principles of the present, and establish a path for the next several decades. Gensler will be expected to provide an actionable plan that will help UH create state-of-the-art, fiscally responsible solutions for the future.

“Today’s announcement is the next step forward in the process to build a new University Hospital for the future - upon the foundations of a promise made in the past. This selection and the firm’s work is in line with the Board’s ongoing commitment to keep the process moving and we look forward to Gensler’s master plan and recommendations on the revitalization and modernization of University Hospital. A new plan and design for the physical campus in Newark is long overdue and will go a long way towards delivering world-class healthcare for our community and for the citizens of the Garden State,” said **Tanya Freeman, Chair of the University Hospital Board of Directors**.

“This is an exciting opportunity to transform University Hospital and recommit to our community,” said **Dr. Diane Hill, Chair of the University Hospital Community Oversight Board**. “We have spent the last several years reconnecting with our community, most recently by creating our Community Advisory Council. I look forward to involving the Council and those they represent as this process moves forward.”

As a leading academic medical center, a renewed and expanded University Hospital facility would also set this campus as a destination where the academic and clinical missions of medicine converge to the ultimate benefit of the patients. In partnership with Rutgers, this campus will become a national model for public health and a premier regional resource for advanced services across many medical specialties.

“Rutgers clinicians and scientists work every day to improve the health of the citizens of New Jersey by applying knowledge and treatments made available through cutting-edge research,” said **Brian L. Strom, Chancellor, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and Executive Vice President for Health Affairs, Rutgers University**. “The design of a future-focused University Hospital will facilitate innovative training for our students and support life-changing medical breakthroughs for our patients. We are excited to assist in the development of a plan that will so greatly enrich the lives of our patients and community members.”

In recent years, Hospital and clinical leadership have worked tirelessly to achieve dramatic improvements in the quality of care delivered to patients and the financial performance of the operations. Compared to 2018, UH has achieved significant improvement in its quality measures across an array of common Hospital Acquired Conditions, including central line-associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI) by 40.3%; catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI) by 47.1%; C. difficile by 22.6%; and Surgical Site Infection by 86.2%. UH has also improved the efficiency of its care delivery, decreasing Length of Stay by 7.3%, and meeting the Vizient national benchmark of other complex academic medical centers throughout the country.

Simultaneously, and without compromising care, the Hospital's leadership team has keenly focused on operational efficiency, achieving results that the State's Monitor called for in 2018. Through careful control of expenses and smart capital investments, UH now boasts positive bottom-line results after several years in the negative. In terms of hospital recovery, University Hospital made *Forbes'* 2021 list of America's Best Employers. The Hospital continues to show consistent improvement in its performance as part of the Leapfrog Hospital Safety report card distributed in the spring and fall of each year. Financial performance continues to improve, and the hospital has completed nearly all of the recommended improvement steps requested by a state monitor in 2018.

Local elected leaders lauded the potential transformation of University Hospital when funding for the study and planning were originally announced in April 2021:

“An expansion of University Hospital would help improve access to healthcare and services for our Newark residents, while continuing to build upon the strong commitment to our community,” said **Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka**. “I’m thankful for Dr. Elnahal’s vision and for the leadership of Governor Murphy, our State legislators, County and local partners for believing in the significance of the support this brand new facility can bring for so many families and further strengthen our entire health and medical community, especially as we emerge from the pandemic.”

Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. said, “The hospital has been an essential resource promoting the health of our residents and contributing greatly to the economic stability of Newark and Essex County. Developing new infrastructure is long overdue and will enable UH to continue to provide quality health, medical and emergency care for future generations.”

“University Hospital has been and continues to be an anchor institution in the City of Newark and a New Jersey state asset,” said **New Jersey State Senator Teresa Ruiz** last April. “This tangible first step, assigning funds to explore expanding their facilities, creates a pathway to establishing it as a premiere hospital which is both critically needed and a long overdue promise to my community. A new facility doesn’t solely open its doors to offering patients a better healthcare experience, it can create opportunities to expand the footprint of services offered and attract research funding. With the ongoing critical financial support from the state, UH will continue to be a place that offers equity in healthcare and will become one of the country’s best biomedical campuses.”

“For over 40 years, the current University Hospital facility has been an integral part of the fabric of Newark and of the State of New Jersey. It has provided care and treatment to hundreds of thousands of people, and served as an invaluable training, education, and research source for medical professionals and students from across the country,” said **New Jersey Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin**. “The positive growth in the surrounding communities, though, means that the facility now struggles to meet the demands upon it. For the good of the community and the state, the time has come to plan for its replacement. A new hospital will allow us to make a better use of space and build with a plan for technology upgrades, for both the present and the future. A fresh facility will also create opportunities to educate more students through the Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, and further grow our state’s standing as a source of top-notch medical professionals.”

“University Hospital is not only a staple fixture in our community, it’s also a part of our history and the primary source of healthcare and vital services that residents in the area rely on,” said **Assemblywoman Shanique Speight**. “Although UH has done an incredible job to meet the growing needs of the community with limited space, it’s imperative that provisions are made to expand its footing and increase its capacity to adequately serve patients.”

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About Gensler

Gensler is a global architecture, design, and planning firm with 49 locations across Asia, Europe, Australia, the Middle East, and the Americas. Founded in 1965, the firm serves more than 3,500 active clients in virtually every industry. Gensler designers strive to make the places people live, work, and play more inspiring, more resilient, and more impactful.

About University Hospital

University Hospital is one of the nation's leading academic medical centers and is the Level 1 Trauma Center for Northern New Jersey. Located at University Heights in Newark, University Hospital is a principal teaching hospital of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and a regional resource for advanced services across many medical specialties. For more information about University Hospital, please visit www.uhnj.org.

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