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DiGiorgio Assoc. develops master plan for new 101,000 s/f Huggins Hospital replacement project

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In September 2005, DiGiorgio Associates Inc. (DAI) was selected to evaluate the Huggins Hospital existing site. After exploring campus options and off-campus sites, a replacement hospital of 101,000 s/f on the existing site made the most sense. Budgets for various options ranged between \$35 and \$62 million.

The current site has a favorable history and excellent access. The option to build on the existing campus presented a challenge stemming from how to keep the existing acute care hospital in operation and accessible during construction as well as dealing with site issues from wetlands to access and parking.

The DAI team developed a master plan scheme to keep the existing facilities intact and fully operational during the building of a new two-story, acute care facility. The 17.9 acre site plan reduces road entrances, aligning them to community routes and simplified service access. A heliport adjacent to the ambulance emergency entrance enhances emergency service directly to the ED.

The new main building podium level houses the main entry, lobby, registration, dietary, lab, emergency department, surgical suites, and diagnostic imaging. A second level bedroom program accommodates the medical/surgical, ICU, and administration areas. An outdoor healing garden, two indoor skylight gardens and a cafe with an outside dining patio are additional features. Sustainable and environmentally friendly products were incorporated where feasible.

Two unique elements of this critical access hospital are the bed expansion capabilities designed for future conversion of Administration to beds through a "grid" for beds basis and easy conversion of eight "observation" beds to full size single medical/surgical beds.

A ground breaking ceremony was held July 8, 2008, as this project was still able to move forward with construction despite tough economic times. The grand opening celebration was held in May of 2010. Hundreds of members of the public attended to celebrate the completion of the new facility.

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