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## **University of Maine at Augusta nursing program to move to 20,000 s/f at WS Development's Marketplace at Augusta**

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Marketplace at Augusta - Augusta, ME

Augusta, ME The University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) will expand enrollment in its in-demand nursing degree programs to better meet state healthcare workforce needs when it moves into the Marketplace at Augusta later this year.

At their meeting in late January, University of Maine System (UMS) Trustees approved UMA undertaking renovations to repurpose the former Purdue University Global site in the Marketplace at Augusta into the future home of its nursing and cybersecurity training programs.

Set to open later this year, the 20,000 s/f facility, which will be called the UMA Capital Center, will serve as an expanded location for classes, demonstrations, seminars and more.

Located directly across Civic Center Drive from UMA's main campus in Augusta, the university's new location for its nursing program at Marketplace at Augusta is conveniently situated among the property's more than 45 retail shops and restaurants, offering students and staff a unique off-campus experience owned and operated by WS Development.

Over the past five years, enrollment in UMA's nursing program has grown from 50 students to 320, and when fully built-out, the new Capital Center will support the high-quality, hands-on education and training of almost 400 nursing students total in support of Maine's healthcare workforce needs.

Funding for the renovations necessary to support this growth are expected to occur in two phases. The initial phase, which will allow the UMA Capital Center to begin serving students this year, will be funded with \$1.8 million received through a \$4.5 million Congressionally Directed Spending award secured by senators Susan Collins and Angus King in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 to improve nursing simulation across UMS and patient outcomes across Maine.

MaineGeneral Medical Center with headquarters in Augusta, is also contributing \$480,000 over four years for the expansion of the nursing program to help meet the growing demand for nursing professionals in Maine.

An additional \$4.5 million in Congressionally Directed Spending requested by senators Collins, the vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and King specifically for the further build-out of the UMA Capital Center is pending in Congress as part of ongoing FY 2024 federal budget negotiations and if secured, would support a second phase.

UMA president Jenifer Cushman said, "Having this location to expand UMA's workforce development offerings will allow our nursing and cybersecurity to continue to grow and meet the demands of Mainers desiring a quality education in high-demand fields. We are also excited to be partnering with MaineGeneral Medical Center to create more skilled health care workers, especially nurses."

"MaineGeneral is proud to partner with University of Maine Augusta on this project which will allow for increased enrollment in the nursing program, helping to mitigate the current and projected nursing shortage in Maine. Given our aging population it is essential that we work collaboratively to ensure that our communities have access to high quality nursing care now and in the years to come," said chief nursing officer for MaineGeneral Medical Center and the CEO for MaineGeneral Community Care Jennifer Riggs, who also chairs the UMA Board of Visitors.

"Nurses are more important than ever in our oldest-in-the-nation state, providing critical, compassionate care not just in hospitals and health care centers, but in nursing homes, schools and communities," said Shannon Gauvin, director of the University of Maine at Augusta's nursing

program. “The new UMA Capital Center, supported by senators Collins and King and Maine General, will enable us to provide high-quality, hands-on clinical training including in simulated settings to help more students cultivate the skills necessary to facilitate positive patient outcomes and graduate ready for a successful career in nursing. We are excited to open at Marketplace at Augusta.”

“We are proud to partner with University of Maine Augusta to open a new space for its growing programs. Providing a place for both learning and leisure, it is a destination beyond the classroom where educators and students can also enjoy the property’s mix of great local, regional and national businesses, as well as community activations,” said Nick Margitza, senior director, leasing at WS Development and Marketplace at Augusta.

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