

## More people, more medical care, more

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The first phase of a \$285 million hospital expansion opens next week to serve one of the fastest-growing parts of the state.

On Monday, patients will start checking in at the Sunnybrook Medical Office, the first of several additions to Kaiser Permanente's 53-acre Sunnyside Medical Center off Southeast Sunnyside Road.

The building, boasting nearly 160,000 square feet of floor space, offers specialty care services and an outpatient surgery unit that covers an entire floor. The surgery center will begin operations June 4.

The expansion serves northern Clackamas County, where Happy Valley has doubled in population since 2000 and the newly formed city of Damascus is just getting started.

"Basically, we think we've positioned ourselves to handle the growth out to the foreseeable future, good for about 10 years," says Jesse Gamez, Kaiser Sunnyside's administrator. He said the rapid growth in the area prompted Kaiser officials three years ago to step back and analyze the hospital's needs for the next decade.

Sunnybrook Medical Office is part of the \$270 million Kaiser Permanente officials have invested in improving and expanding medical services at the Sunnyside campus.

Construction of a third hospital wing, a five-story building towering over Southeast Sunnybrook Boulevard, should be finished this summer.

The 200,000-square-foot building will include a new intensive care unit, expected to open sometime this summer, and a 14-bed birthing center, scheduled to open by fall. The building has a capacity of 170 beds.

Kaiser Permanente officials broke ground for the latest series of improvements in 2005, nearly 30 years after groundbreaking ceremonies for the Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center.

It's the largest expansion project Kaiser Permanente has undertaken since the Sunnyside facility opened in 1975, according to Kaiser spokesman Jim Gersbach.

One of the first projects completed was a three-story, 700-car parking structure that serves the Mount Scott and Mount Talbert medical office buildings as well as the hospital and the Sunnybrook Medical Office.

Gamez said the opening of the Sunnybrook building allows the hospital to move more patients into outpatient surgery, freeing the hospital's operating rooms for surgeries on patients requiring hospital stays.

Kaiser Sunnyside expects about 4,500 outpatient surgeries will be performed annually at

the Sunnybrook Medical Office.

The outpatient surgery center has six fully equipped operating rooms, with space to expand to eight rooms.

More than 300 of Kaiser Sunnyside's estimated 2,400 employees will staff the new medical building.

In the past few years, Kaiser Sunnyside and other hospitals have been working with Clackamas Community College to develop training programs for nurses.

Last week, the college announced it would break ground June 5 for a \$20 million urban nursing and allied health campus on Southeast Harmony Road, less than two miles from the hospital. The new campus is intended to help address the shortage of registered nurses and health care professionals in Clackamas County and throughout the nation.

With available space at the Kaiser Sunnyside campus at a premium, Gamez said the next expansion may be up, rather than out.

"Yes, vertical expansion may be an option," he said. "If we need more hospital space, we'd probably have to look at the configuration of all buildings on campus."

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ILLUSTRATION: Graphic/Changes to the Sunnyside medical complex

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