Saint Alphonsus is moving its Nampa hospital to Garrity/I-84

Since March 2013, Saint Alphonsus Health System has been swiftly redefining its presence in Nampa. The Boise health care provider had just arrived in Nampa in 2010 as it acquired the Mercy Medical Center hospital south of downtown Nampa – plus land Mercy had acquired at Interstate 84 and Garrity Boulevard.

“We jumped on that,” Saint Alphonsus CEO Rodney Reider said. “You want the access to the freeway with the EMS (paramedic) squads. We wanted a location where more people have access.”

Saint Alphonsus then committed to a new Nampa hospital – with a napkin drawing signed by company officials, now framed in the office of Karl Keeler, president of Saint Alphonsus Medical Center Nampa and Ontario.

Nampa had grown up to become Idaho’s second largest city since Mercy built its hospital in 1968 on 12th Avenue South, 2 miles south of downtown. Nampa had grown northward with its main retail corridor right along the freeway, a major route for emergency medical service vehicles.

Saint Alphonsus Nampa Health Plaza opened in March 2013 at Garrity, I-84 and Flamingo Avenue with an 11-bed, 24/7 emergency department, followed in January 2014 with Birkeland Maternity Center and Heart Center and in January with a 67,000-square-foot medical office building.

These facilities all set the stage for the Saint Alphonsus master plan to consolidate on 38 acres along I-84 with a new Saint Alphonsus Medical Center hospital, billed as a “replacement” hospital for the 12th Avenue facility.

The $80 million hospital will rebrand the Garrity/I-84 property as Saint Alphonsus Medical Center – Nampa. By the hospital’s expected opening in summer 2017, Saint Alphonsus will have built 370,000 square
feet in just over four years along the freeway in Nampa, its largest project since the central tower in 2007 at the main Saint Alphonsus campus in Boise.

“The first thing people will see driving into the community is Saint Alphonsus,” Reider said at a June 19 groundbreaking ceremony in Nampa. “This is offering flexibility for the future.” Saint Alphonsus will remain on 12th Avenue in a different capacity.

“It doesn’t mean we’re abandoning 12th Avenue,” Keeler said.

The hospital plans to swap facilities. The current emergency department on Garrity will move to 12th Avenue and will also include lab services and physician offices, and the Garrity space will largely be dedicated to the cancer center as it’s relocated from 12th Avenue and enlarged, Keeler said.

The new, 240,000-square-foot hospital building will have 74 beds. Combined with the existing 26 beds at the Nampa health plaza, the new Saint Alphonsus Medical Center – Nampa will offer 100 beds.

Layton Construction is the general contractor. The new hospital was designed by ZGF Architects, the Portland firm that master-planned Boise’s modern downtown 30 years ago. ZGF has also designed a couple of dozen hospitals, including the Children’s Hospital Colorado, where Keeler worked at one time and became acquainted with ZGF. “They bring in the whole community to give input,” Keeler said.

For example, the paramedics offered suggestions that were incorporated into the ambulance bay, which will have heaters and will be set up to paramedic specifications to enable two ambulances to easily get in and out.

“Our design of the whole building started with the patient,” Keeler said. “The way the lighting is (in a room), the way the bathroom is, the way the heating is, each is designed for the individual patient.”

Climate control is individualized for each room.

Each room is also outfitted with all the equipment and supplies to start intravenous treatment, change bandages and care for wounds, a change from the traditional trek to supply rooms for such items, said Darin Lee, vice president of medical affairs at Saint Alphonsus in Nampa. There will be a couch that converts to a bed for family members, and an iPad, Keeler said.

Saint Alphonsus is employing Lean Six Sigma methodologies to “take out wasted steps” to achieve the features described above, Keeler said.

Lean Six Sigma improves efficiency and effectiveness by following these steps: define, measure, analyze, improve, control as outlined in a 2002 book called “Lean Six Sigma: Combining Six Sigma with Lean Speed” by Michael George and Robert Lawrence Jr.