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For Immediate Release

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PeaceHealth announces beginning of comprehensive process to close underutilized University District hospital in Eugene

*PeaceHealth plans to move inpatient rehabilitation, emergency and medical services to its RiverBend campus in Springfield*

VANCOUVER, Wash. – PeaceHealth today announced the beginning of what will be a comprehensive process to close its underutilized University District hospital in Eugene. Upon receiving regulatory approval, the health system plans to transition Inpatient Rehabilitation, Emergency Department and related medical services to PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend, located less than 6 miles away in Springfield. Ambulatory Services, including PeaceHealth Medical Group clinics and Home & Community services, will remain open and ready to serve the needs of the community in Eugene. PeaceHealth intends to continue providing Behavioral Health services at University District until there is a sustainable alternative in the community.

“After careful consideration and an ongoing ethical discernment, PeaceHealth has decided to close the hospital at University District,” said Alicia Beymer, chief administrative officer PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center, University District. “As the needs of the Lane County community evolve, PeaceHealth services and sites of care also need to evolve to ensure compassionate, high-quality care now and in the future. We believe consolidating some services at RiverBend will provide an enhanced care experience.”

Since opening in 2008, the RiverBend hospital has increased capacity and access, and the community’s reliance on University District has diminished, with patient volume declining to the point where the University District facility consistently generates losses averaging $2 million per month. University District now sees an average of just 95 patient visits daily, with an average of only 15.5 patients *per month* admitted as inpatients and only 7.5 patients *per month* admitted for observation. Only about two-thirds of patients present for routine medical care. The other one-third seek behavioral health services that would be better served by a [crisis stabilization center planned for Lane County](https://www.lcstabilizationcenter.com/).

“We are committed to serving the people of Lane County and plan to *increase* our care and services over the coming years,” added Beymer. “By discontinuing services at University District, which have unsustainable negative operating margins, we can more effectively invest our resources to better meet the Lane County community’s current and emerging needs and ensure patients have access to the right care, in the right setting, at the right time.”

PeaceHealth outlined the next steps in what will be a comprehensive process involving the state and other community partners. The plan, which requires regulatory approval, focuses on the three core healthcare services currently provided at University District:

* **Emergency Department –** PeaceHealth intends to phase out Emergency Department services on the University District campus in November. The goal is to consolidate limited Emergency Department resources at RiverBend, which has available capacity and can accommodate additional emergency and in-patient volume. PeaceHealth also plans investments to expand patient access, including additional secure spaces for patients experiencing behavioral and mental health challenges.
* **Inpatient Rehabilitation –** PeaceHealth intends to temporarily relocate the 27-bed inpatient rehabilitation unit at University District to RiverBend in early 2024. Relocation will allow the service to remain available in the community through 2026, when [PeaceHealth and LifePoint Health plan to jointly open](https://www.peacehealth.org/news/2023-03-15/peacehealth-and-lifepoint-rehabilitation-announce-agreement-build-new-inpatient) a separate state-of-the-art 50-bed inpatient rehabilitation facility on the RiverBend campus. The new 67,000-square-foot hospital will double capacity and feature a 12-bed traumatic brain injury unit — a first for the area.
* **Inpatient Behavioral Health –** PeaceHealth intends to continue serving patients at the current behavioral health location at University District until there is a sustainable alternative in the community. This unit provides inpatient services for 1,100 vulnerable, often complex patients per year. PeaceHealth is collaborating with community partners on alternative care models and works with outpatient behavioral health entities in Lane County and beyond that provide wraparound services.

PeaceHealth is committed to retaining its valued caregivers as it evolves its care services in Lane County, finding equivalent positions within PeaceHealth’s Oregon network, including integrating qualified and interested University District caregivers into open positions at the RiverBend campus and other PeaceHealth locations.

**About PeaceHealth:** PeaceHealth, based in Vancouver, Wash., is a not-for-profit Catholic health system offering care to communities in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. PeaceHealth has approximately 16,000 caregivers, a group practice with more than 1,200 providers and 10 medical centers serving both urban and rural communities throughout the Northwest. In 1890, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace founded what has become PeaceHealth. The Sisters shared expertise and transferred wisdom from one medical center to another, always finding the best way to serve the unmet need for healthcare in their communities. Today, PeaceHealth is the legacy of the founding Sisters and continues with a spirit of respect, stewardship, collaboration and social justice in fulfilling its Mission. Visit us online at [peacehealth.org](http://www.peacehealth.org/).

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