

Visit the Mohawk neighborhood and the biggest thing you might see is a completely renovated McKenzie Willamette Medical Center. Over the past three years, the hospital has completed a major rebuilding in place. On April 4, Nate Carter, the Chief Operating Officer of the hospital provided an update on the project to Springfield City Club.

The \$115 million expansion has significantly increased the hospital's capacity. Three new operating rooms have been added, for a total of 10. The cardiovascular unit has doubled in size and the emergency room has more than doubled in size, from 17 beds to 38. Although the medical/surgical capacity, at 62 beds, is little changed, now most of the rooms are private. Carter said they could not make all rooms private without making a much larger expansion than the 153,000 square feet that have been added. The only area of the hospital that has not expanded is the administrative offices.



Parking is even more of a challenge after the expansion and, as a result, the hospital offers complimentary valet service. Carter said they are looking to add more parking in the future.

In addition to expanding the size of the hospital, new services have been added. In particular, the hospital now offers "device safe" MRI procedures – and is the only hospital outside of Portland that offers this service, which allows patients who have implanted devices, like pacemakers, to safely undergo an MRI scan. The hospital is now the only facility in Oregon which offers trans carotid revascularization – a procedure which can address the 20 to 30 percent of strokes caused by blockages in the carotid artery. In addition, the Hospital has upgraded its DaVinci robotic surgery system to the most recent level.

The emergency service is one where Carter says much attention is focused. The Hospital has long advertised a "30 minute" pledge – that a patient will be seen in the ER by a medical professional within 30 minutes of arrival. He says that in 2018, they maintained an average of 26 minutes, with a total of 48,566 ER visits. Part of the credit, he said, goes to Eugene Urgent Care, which manages the Emergency Room for the hospital.



During questions from the audience, Carter addressed the concern that had been raised several years ago when McKenzie Willamette, which had always operated as a community hospital, was acquired by a for-profit entity. He said that they had been able to maintain their focus on the community by a concentrated effort to maintain and support long-term staff who have strong community ties. He described McKenzie Willamette as the "crown jewel" of the 30 hospitals owned by Quorum, based in Nashville, and credited their efforts with maintaining strong corporate support. They intend to continue that by offering services which are not readily available elsewhere. He said the hospital would be focusing on expanding outpatient services to support growth, rather than attempting to expand beds, which would involve a complex state process.