

Master Planning – Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is hospital master planning?

Hospital master planning is a long-term strategy for guiding facility improvements and service delivery to meet future healthcare needs in a coordinated, efficient way.

2. Does this mean the hospitals are closing?

No. The hospitals are not closing. The planning process is designed to improve care and ensure the hospitals remain sustainable and responsive to community needs.

3. Why is hospital master planning necessary?

It helps the hospitals address aging infrastructure, changing care models, new technology, and evolving community health trends.

4. What are the goals of this master plan?

To modernize facilities, improve patient care, expand access to services, and strengthen the hospitals' ability to serve the communities well into the future.

5. How long will this process take?

Planning may take several months to a year. Implementation will occur in three stages over several years, depending on the scope and funding.

6. Will services be interrupted during this process?

No. Plans are designed to maintain continuity of care while improvements are made.

7. What role does the community play in the planning process?

Community feedback is essential. Engagement ensures the plan reflects real healthcare needs and values.

8. How will patients benefit from the master plan?

Patients can expect more modern, efficient facilities, improved access to services, and a better overall care experience.

9. Will there be changes to emergency or specialty care services?

The plan may include adjustments based on utilization data and clinical priorities, always with a focus on improving care.

10. Are jobs at risk due to this plan?

Staffing decisions will be made thoughtfully. The goal is to align staffing with future service needs, and in many cases, new roles or training opportunities may emerge.

11. What are the benefits of partnership with other organizations or systems?

Partnerships can offer expanded resources, clinical expertise, new technology, and improved efficiency while maintaining local care.

12. Will the hospitals be sold or taken over?

No. While partnerships may be explored, decisions will prioritize the hospitals' mission and community health.

13. How will this be funded?

Funding sources may include hospital reserves, grants, philanthropy, and partnerships.

14. Will the community have input before final decisions are made?

Yes. Community forums, surveys, and advisory groups will help shape the final plan.

15. What role do physicians and staff play in the planning process?

They provide critical input to ensure the plan supports clinical excellence and operational needs.

16. Is this about cutting costs or reducing services?

The plan is about strategic investment and reallocation—focusing resources where they have the greatest impact on care quality and access. It is about smarter investments that enhance care, access, and sustainability.

17. How is technology being considered in the master plan?

Technology is a major focus. Plans may include telemedicine, digital tools, data analytics and advanced infrastructure to improve care.

18. Will this affect rural or underserved populations?

Equity is a priority. The plan prioritizes health equity and aims to enhance access for all, including underserved areas.

19. Where can I find updates or get involved?

Updates will be shared via the hospitals' website, social media, newsletters, and public forums. Community members are encouraged to participate and share feedback.

20. How does community engagement fit into the master plan?

Engagement with communities is a crucial step that the Ministry requires for a master plan. Huron Health System (HHS) created the Community Engagement Council in 2024 to enhance communication and collaboration between HHS and the communities it serves so that community members can be informed and involved in the planning and, when appropriate, the decision-making process for health care services and policies