

California Construction

Healthcare Construction 2010

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By David Silva

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Major California health facility projects under way include the Palomar Pomerado Health Center West in Escondido, Sutter Medical Center Castro Valley, Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Healthcare System Inpatient Mental Health Center and the Huntington Hospital expansion in Pasadena.

An 800,000-sq-ft hospital near San Diego, the largest of many healthcare facility projects under way throughout the Golden State, is back on track after a rocky start.

Work started on Palomar Pomerado Health Center West in Escondido in December 2007, with Redwood City-based Rudolph & Sletten on board as construction manager. Two design firms – CO Architects of Los Angeles and Anshen +

Allen of San Francisco – were hired to collaborate as project architect.

But months later, owner Palomar Pomerado Health (PPH) fired Rudolph & Sletten in an effort to shave \$50 million off the project's cost, which had risen from an initial estimate of \$531 million to its current \$917 million. DPR Construction of Newport Beach was brought in to complete the development.

Then, in December, PPH filed a lawsuit against Rudolph & Sletten, alleging breach of contract, fraud and negligent representation.

Asked by phone about the allegations, Martin Sisemore, Rudolph and Sletten president and CEO, says he couldn't comment on any of the specifics of the lawsuit.

North San Diego County voters in 2004 approved a \$496 million bond measure – the largest local healthcare bond issue in state history – to help pay for the project. The balance of the cost will be paid for by the issuance of revenue bonds and money

raised through philanthropic campaigns.

Despite the dispute, hospital officials say construction is proceeding smoothly, with more than 50% of the work finished and a completion date set for early to mid-2012.

That's good news, given that the existing Escondido facility, the 50-plus-year-old Palomar Medical Center, doesn't meet California's strict seismic safety codes. According to PPH spokesman Andy Hoang, hospital officials saw the need to retrofit Palomar Medical as an opportunity to gain a state-of-the-art hospital that would last at least another half-century.

"When we started down this path, we asked ourselves: Do we simply retrofit the existing facility or do we use public dollars to start from scratch?" says Hoang.

What followed were plans for an 11-story, 360-bed facility, with the capacity to expand to 600 beds to accommodate future demand.

The facility will embrace the latest principles gleaned from the Center for Health

Design, a Concord-based organization that researches and advocates improvements in how healthcare facilities are designed and run.

Among them: Every patient room will be single-occupancy, and all will be identical in layout and ready to be reconfigured to meet changes in the patient's medical condition. Every room will have a nursing station located immediately adjacent to it instead of in a centralized location. Every admitted patient will be assigned a multi-disciplinary team of healthcare professionals to treat the patient throughout his or her length of care.

"What PPH charged us with was to take the best-documented research and knowledge that had been built up through the Center for Health Design and link those practices to the benefit of the patient," says Tom Chessum, a principal with CO Architects.

"Evidence-based design has set out to provide the design world with research that shows if you implement these best practices, there will be improved healthcare, and patients will get better faster. The net result is more efficient care, less costly care, and a better outcome for everybody." <<

The Project Team

Owner:

Palomar Pomerado Health of Poway

Construction Manager:

DPR Construction, Newport Beach

Project Architect:

An association of CO Architects, Los Angeles, and Anshen + Allen, San Francisco

Structural Steel Contractor:

The Herrick Corp., Stockton

Plumbing Contractor:

University Mechanical Contractors Inc., Mukilteo, WA



Healthcare



Palomar Pomerado Health of Poway is building its \$917-million Health Center West project in Escondido. Renderings courtesy of CO Architects and Anshen and Allen.

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