

## **Incident Summary**

On the afternoon of Thursday, December 29, Altru Main Clinic experienced a failure involving a structural beam column connection located just below the Altru Clinic Pharmacy on the main level. Patients and staff were immediately evacuated. Work was done immediately to stabilize the building and prevent further damage. Clinical departments were relocated throughout the health system and departments have continued operation.

## **Building Assessment**

Engineers from EAPC and Construction Engineers immediately analyzed the failure, performed design calculations and developed and implemented plans to correct the failure.

Altru hired a third party structural engineering consultant, Heyer Engineering, to review the structural integrity of the clinic to allow reuse of the building. A third party analysis further assures the public the safety of our building. Heyer subcontracted a structural forensic specialist to be part of their team. They developed a seven-step process to re-certify the structural integrity.

On Tuesday, January 3, Heyer was onsite and met with EAPC Structural Engineers, reviewed their plans and did an onsite structural inspection. Problems evident by their observations included:

1. Undersized stiff plate
2. Lack of lateral bracing
3. Undersized column cap plate
4. Improper orientation of column flanges

All observations can be corrected, but would take several months to correct; expected costs would be significant.

## **Altru's Decision: Replace the Facility**

The building was originally designed and built between 1974 and 1976 by Harold J Westin & Associates from St. Paul, Minn. After reviewing information available to us, it is our belief that design deficiencies caused the failure in the beam.

It is important to point out that the design components are limited to the Main Clinic; none of Altru's other buildings have the same design. After hearing the preliminary assessment from the experts, we decided we could not in good conscience ask our staff and patients to go back into the building.

With the support of Altru's Board of Directors, we have decided to replace the facility. In addition to patient safety and patient care, moving in this direction is a solid business decision for those whom we serve.

## **Reviewing & Updating Altru's Master Site & Facility Plan**

Six years ago, our Board of Directors approved a Master Site and Facility Plan that called for replacing all of our buildings on Columbia Road. Goals for the plan included: making all hospital patient rooms private rooms, increasing capacity and efficiency in our clinics, reducing congestion on our Columbia Road campus, and designing our buildings for how care will be delivered in the future. This replacement was to occur in several phases over the course of fifteen years.

A few months later, we were able to address our most immediate needs – private hospital rooms and increased clinic capacity – by acquiring facilities on South Washington Medical Park. This bought us some time but many of the facility challenges we faced six years ago still exist today.

The best way to serve our patients is to make replacement of the Main Clinic the first phase of implementing our Master Plan. Over the next several months, we'll review and update the Master Plan and begin design and construction of facilities that help us to accomplish the goals set forth in the original plan. This will certainly involve building a major clinic on the Columbia Road campus. It could also involve facilities in other parts of our community as we seek to reduce congestion around the Altru Hospital.

Implementing the full first phase of our plan will take considerable time – probably two years. We also believe that there are pieces of the plan that we can complete much faster than that. As specific plans are developed, we'll be excited to share them with you.

## **Interim Operations**

Even though we have lost a significant amount of square footage we have been able to provide the high quality care that our patients expect. We have maintained near full operations of our clinic specialties and expect to be fully operational in the near future.

An assessment of the interim locations of all clinic practices is ongoing and we are anticipating the potential need of some remodeling to accommodate the long term placement of these practices.

As services and locations evolve, we are dedicated to keeping our patients, doctors and staff aware and informed of these changes.

We look to the future with optimism. We remain committed to being innovative and efficient in how we deliver healthcare. Our highest priority is the patient and as we move forward we will strive to meet our patients' needs and provide a world class health care experience.

## General Questions

### **Was anyone injured due to this incident?**

No.

### **What are the costs associated with building a new facility?**

A full cost estimate is not yet available. We have worked hard to maintain a strong balance sheet so that we are fully able to respond to any potential emergency. Altru is a strong organization and we are confident that we have the resources to do what we need to do. Our first and foremost priority is on preserving and growing patient care services and ensuring our patients can receive care and that doctors and staff can provide care in the safest and best facilities available.

### **Does this affect other capital plans for the health system?**

As of now, nothing has changed. Over the next few weeks we'll be evaluating all of our plans for how we will move forward.

### **Will we be able to retrieve personal belongings?**

We are working through a way for everyone to obtain their items in an organized and safe fashion. It might not be you, personally, obtaining your items. Someone else may be retrieving them. Our first priority is to obtain necessary patient care equipment and supplies. As we develop further plans we will share those with you.

### **How will we move forward with operations?**

It's clear to us all that we've been in an incident command mode. We will soon transition to operational leaders who will be charged with moving us forward. Brad Wehe, Chief Operating Officer and Dr. Colleen Swank, Chief Medical Officer will be developing initial plans to move us forward. As we continue, we will work closely with everyone closest to the work. We value all input provided to make the best environment for patients, providers and staff.

### **What do we tell patients who are unable to get services because equipment is unavailable?**

We are working to ensure the safety of the building so that we can obtain necessary patient care equipment and supplies. We are also compiling a list from the service areas so we can prioritize the needs. Our goal is to ensure patients receive the same services they have come to know and deserve from us and to do it as safely and quickly as possible.