



# Understanding our Communities: Hospital Trends and Expansion Projects

By John DiAngelo, Inspira Health Network President and CEO

**Across the nation, hospital leaders are focused on the changing needs and preferences of their communities. This attention to change and growth requires an understanding of how individuals and families make health care decisions, ensuring we have the people, services and facilities in place to meet their needs. At Inspira Health Network, our trustees, advisory boards, strategic partners and you—our patients and families—provide us with vital insight on where our health network needs to concentrate its efforts and resources.**

Let me provide a current example. Demand for Emergency Department services in Cumberland County and surrounding communities has risen steadily during the past seven years. In the past 18 months, the demand has grown even more rapidly. Today, we see on average nearly 39 more patients a day in the ER than we did in 2009. Additionally, the average number of patients receiving inpatient care has grown considerably. In response to these rapid changes, we have launched two major construction projects and several initiatives.

If you have driven by our Vineland ER in the past few weeks, you have probably noticed construction work near the walk-in entrance. This construction will result in a new 11-bed Senior Emergency Department, complete with a separate waiting area. This specialized ER will provide our seniors with an experience specifically designed to meet their needs. Just as children can benefit from our distinct pediatric ER, the same is true for seniors. Of course, this new specialized ER will also help us provide more timely care for patients of all ages.

Another project, set to begin later this year, is the construction of a new 36-bed inpatient unit at Inspira Medical Center Vineland. The project will also include an additional floor that will be left as a shell for future expansion. These added rooms will speed the process for ER patients who need to be admitted to an inpatient unit.

Recently, we introduced Rapid Care to improve the experience and reduce wait times for all patients. Rapid Care creates a streamlined track for people with minor ailments, freeing up resources for those whose conditions are true emergencies. This initiative provides a better experience for all patients.

Cancer services are another area in which we are responding to the needs of our communities. Our nationally accredited cancer program based in the Frank and Edith Scarpa Regional Cancer Pavilion in Vineland has provided exceptional cancer services for more than 35 years. More recently, we have been working toward national accreditation for our cancer services in Woodbury. We are well on our way and expect news from the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer accrediting program later this year. We are also just a few months away from opening a first-in-the nation radiation therapy center to feature the SmartVue™ *Natural Light Solution* that provides patients with a large window that looks upon a landscaped garden. This will reduce anxiety and promote a sense of well-being.

Our surgical services are seeing growth in a number of areas, including bariatric weight loss surgery. To provide more flexible and timely appointments that fit our patients' busy schedules, we are establishing a bariatric surgery program at Inspira Medical Center Elmer. Our experience running a nationally accredited comprehensive bariatric surgery center in Vineland has guided the development of our Elmer program. Our highly skilled surgeons are supported by a bariatric team that is committed to providing comprehensive pre- and post-surgery education and support. It's not uncommon for patients to attend our support programs for months, even years, after their surgery. These long-term relationships help ensure long-term success for our patients.

The largest, and soon to be most visible, example of meeting the needs of our communities is the development of our new Inspira Medical Center Mullica Hill. We believe opening a state-of-the-art

hospital, just off Route 55 adjacent to the Rowan campus, will enable us to meet the needs of Gloucester County residents for generations to come.

The design of our new hospital and the selection of services that will be provided reflect the changing and growing needs of local residents. Of course, they also are being shaped by the changes in how health care is provided. Outpatient services continue to grow as surgical techniques and new therapies require fewer people to spend even one night in the hospital. For the convenience of patients and family members, we have located these outpatient services in areas that allow for quick access. We also have plans for medical office buildings on our new campus, making it quick and convenient for both our patients and physicians who need to visit the hospital and a medical office on the same trip.

Recognizing that personal technology will continue to grow in importance, we are incorporating the latest technology for patients and visitors in our new hospital. We even have plans to create new specialized apps that will help you achieve and maintain good health. And if you need help with one of our apps, our help desk staff will be there to assist you. This support will also be made available at our other hospital campuses.

At Inspira, we are always looking ahead to ensure that we can provide the services you and your family need today and in the future. This forward-thinking philosophy combined with our commitment to patient safety, clinical excellence and providing a "Wow!" experience will allow us to consistently provide you with great health services for many years to come.



[www.InspiraHealthNetwork.org](http://www.InspiraHealthNetwork.org)