GMH board asks for building designs.

Gothenburg hospital officials are moving ahead with plans to build a multi-physician specialty clinic.

“It would eliminate duplication of services and provide them more economically,” said Gothenburg Memorial Hospital administrator John Johnson.

Johnson said a new clinic would also solve cramped quarters problems at Gothenburg Family Practice—a clinic attached to the hospital that houses three physicians, a physician’s assistant and staff, Johnson said.

“There’s no room for anyone else,” he said.

The physicians rent the building from the hospital.

At this point, Johnson said the GMH board is soliciting conceptual designs from three construction companies—Paulsen Inc. of Cozad, Lacy Construction Company of Grand Island and Sampson Construction of Omaha.

“We’ve not signed any papers or made any formal commitments,” he said.

Parameters given to the companies, Johnson said, are that the building accommodate up to five doctors and two physician’s assistants and is about 10,000 square feet.

Johnson said the board and hospital administration would also like to have the building attached

to GMH so doctors could use the diagnostic corridor of the hospital where such things as laboratory, X-ray, CAT scans and mammogram equipment are available.

Board members will consider the appearance of the building, location, square footage and cost when selecting a construction firm, he said.

Johnson said he thinks it's a good time to get bids because the construction industry is flat and square foot building costs have dropped.

"That makes us very interested," he said.

Still, Johnson said the downturn in the economy is finally catching up to Nebraska and its hospitals.

Even though there's been belt tightening, he said it's important for the future of health care in the community to have good physicians and a good facility where they can work.

"We're planning for the future in recruiting tomorrow's technologically advanced physicians," he said.

Officials are also working with funding specialists to explore all grant possibilities.

Johnson said they'd like to get a United States Department of Agriculture loan to help pay for the project but it will be a different process than when officials remodeled and built an addition to GMH.

"Because of federal stimulus money, they have different methods," he said, noting that the USDA and private banks would share responsibility for such a loan.

Johnson didn’t know the cost of the project, noting that they are still designing the clinic.

Building a speciality clinic in the community has been talked about by the board for several years, he said.

“We’re moving ahead but cautiously,” Johnson said.

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