



Department of Corrections and Community Supervision

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Walsh Regional Medical Unit Completes Second of Three-Phase Rehab Project *Finished units will create jobs while ensuring proper inmate health care*

ALBANY—The Department’s largest and busiest Regional Medical Unit (RMU), known as Walsh and located on the grounds of Mohawk Correctional Facility, is expanding in Oneida County thanks to growing demand and a \$32 million capital project that is on time and on budget.

Phase two of a three phase construction project at the Walsh RMU was completed on October 21, 2014. The overall expansion and renovation project will grow the number of beds provided for inmates, who need long term care, from 112 to 150 in early fall of 2015. Phase two of the project took more than one year and consisted of constructing two new long term care units in a new building on the current campus. The third and final phase, which is presently in construction with an expected completion date of September 2015, will renovate three existing units at Walsh. The facility currently employs 99 professionals who provide 24 hour 7 day a week care to state inmates. The expansion is expected to increase healthcare staff by 45 positions.

When completed, Walsh RMU will have a total of five units -- four will house long-term care inmates with the fifth being converted to offices, classrooms, and a chapel.

Given the unique structure of Walsh, operating as a maximum-security RMU located at a medium-security correctional facility, the beds will be available to inmates from any of the state’s male prisons.

State prison RMU facilities are a cost savings to taxpayers as it allows for inmates to be cared for within the prison system avoiding taking inmates to area hospitals on a daily basis. Acting Commissioner of New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), Anthony J. Annucci, said the project is essential. “The Walsh RMU is consistently operating at capacity and this expansion project will allow for the care of even more inmates. We have a constitutional obligation to provide health care and quality health care will not be sacrificed,” Annucci said.

Walsh was the first of five regional medical units to operate in the prison system – it opened its doors in March of 1991 responding to the rise in HIV- and AIDS-infected inmates. The unit is accredited by the American Correctional Association and is named after Neil Walsh, a former director of the Rome Developmental Center.

“As DOCCS continues to deal with an aging and sicker inmate population, there is a clear need for additional long term care beds. All state RMU facilities, including Walsh, are able to care for inmate patients immediately after they are discharged from hospital stays thus saving taxpayers the burden of high medical bills associated with non-Medicaid covered treatment,” said, Dr. Carl Koenigsmann, DOCCS’ Deputy Commissioner and Chief Medical Officer.

Mohawk Correctional Facility Superintendent Paul Gonyea said, “Since the inception of the RMU, hard working men and women have played a critical role in delivering healthcare services to the inmate population, especially in a setting that must ensure safety and security. The new facilities will be a tremendous addition and I look forward to the project’s 2015 completion when new jobs and more opportunities will be added to our local economy.”

Four additional maximum-security RMUs operate within the prison system with a combined bed capacity of 210. The other regional medical units are located at Coxsackie (Greene County), Wende (Erie County), Bedford Hills (Westchester), and Fishkill (Dutchess County). The agency health care budget for fiscal year 2012-13 totaled \$340,000,000.

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