

National health care company announces plans for new 100-bed rehabilitation hospital in Clermont

By LAURA KINSLER
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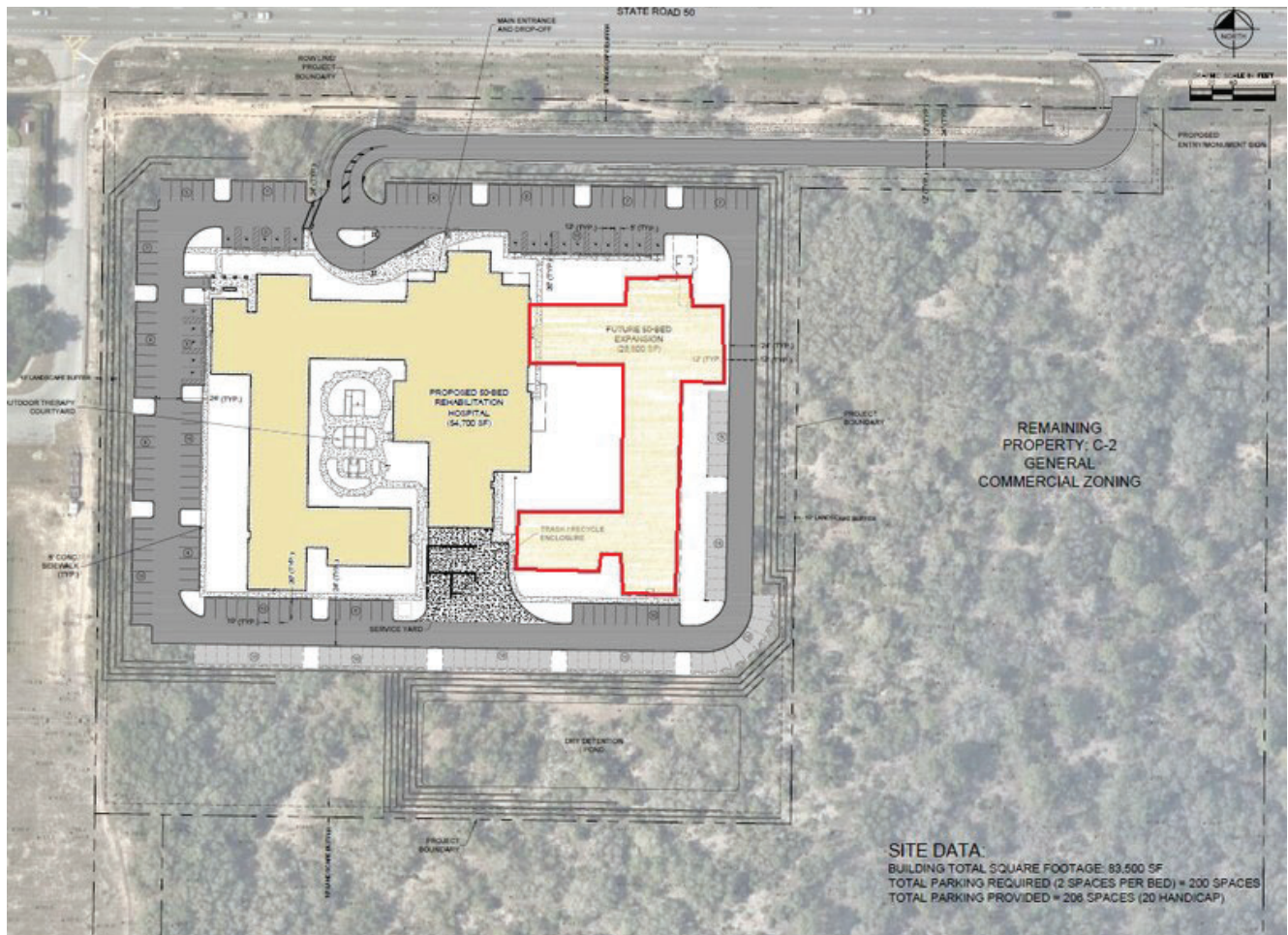
The nation's largest owner and operator of inpatient rehabilitation hospitals will build a 100-bed facility in Clermont. The first phase is 50 beds. (Encompass Health)

A Fortune 100 health care company is planning to build a 100-bed inpatient rehabilitation hospital within a mile of Orlando Health Clermont and the new AdventHealth medical campus.

The Clermont City Council on Tuesday introduced an ordinance to would rezone 32.5 acres on State Road 50 to Planned Unit Development. **Encompass Health** would utilize 11 acres of the parent parcel for the hospital, and the rest would be developed for general commercial uses. The site is about a quarter-mile east of Hancock Road.

The rehabilitation hospital will be constructed in three phases, with a total approximate square footage of 83,500 square feet, when completed. The first phase will consist of 50-beds, the second phase will be 20-beds, and the third phase will be 30-beds. The developer will be responsible for extending Hooks Street through the southern portion of the property, but not until work begins on the commercial section.

The one-story building will feature all private patient rooms, a spacious therapy gym with advanced rehabilitation technologies and activity suite, cafeteria, dining room, pharmacy and therapy courtyard.



The first phase of the hospital is 54,000 square feet and will have 50 private rooms. The future expansion would add another 50 rooms. (Kimley Horn)

Encompass Health is the largest owner and operator of inpatient rehabilitation facilities, with a national footprint that includes 136 hospitals, 245 home health locations, and 83 hospice locations in 39 states and Puerto Rico. The Clermont hospital would be the company's 15th inpatient facility in Florida and second in the pipeline for Central Florida. In July, Encompass Health announced plans for a 50-bed facility in Lakeland and it has one under construction in north Tampa.

President and CEO Mark J. Tarr told investors earlier this year that Florida is a major focus of the company's growth strategy since **the state repealed the law that required hospitals to apply for a Certificate of Need** for new inpatient facilities and expansions. "We saw that as a prime opportunity to accelerate growth in that state."

Tarr said the Encompass Health has expansions underway at five of its existing Florida hospitals, including the one in Altamonte Springs. The company also identified 15 potential sites for new rehabilitation centers. "So we're moving very quick first-to-market in terms of our ability to go out and take advantage of this repeal of the CON," he said.

Repeal of CON laws creates accelerated growth opportunity in Florida – new markets



Each of the light blue dots represents location where Encompass Health is considering or announced a new inpatient rehabilitation hospital. (Encompass Health)

In addition, Encompass brought on **Brasfield & Gorrie** as project manager for the Florida expansion. "We believe that this will help give us the opportunity to have efficiencies, cost efficiencies and also the ability to bring these facilities on in a faster form, versus working with a number of different contractors, and having to bid out each one of these projects," he said.

Each new 50-bed hospital costs between \$25 million and \$35 million to develop. In addition to the Central Florida sites, the company has also announced new locations for Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Naples, Cape Coral and Pensacola.



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The company strives to locate its inpatient facilities close to acute care hospitals, and the Clermont site is strategically located close to Orlando Health, which is planning a new 5-story patient tower, and AdventHealth's new **\$35 million medical campus** at the intersection of S.R. 50 and Citrus Tower Boulevard.

The second reading and adoption of the rezoning ordinance is scheduled for Nov. 10.

The rehabilitation hospital would serve patients recovering from debilitating illnesses and injuries including strokes and other neurological disorders, brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, amputations and complex orthopedic conditions. The hospital will provide physical, occupational and speech therapies that aim to restore functional ability and quality of life and 24-hour care by registered nurses, many of whom are certified in rehabilitation nursing.

The medical staff will be comprised of physicians experienced in physical medicine and rehabilitation as well as other specialties such as internal medicine, cardiology, infectious disease and nephrology to assist in the medical management and support a complex patient population. Each Encompass Health hospital also has an onsite pharmacy, so medications can be adjusted as needed.



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Laura Kinsler is the editor of GrowthSpotter. She joined the company in 2015 as Osceola County reporter after a 15-year career at the Tampa Tribune. A proud graduate of the University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication, Laura follows the Georgia Bulldogs religiously.