

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 8, 2025  
**TO:** Assembly Finance Committee  
**FROM:** Joe Wanner, Chief Executive Officer  
**SUBJECT:** Emergency Department Renovation

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### BACKGROUND & PROJECT GOALS

Bartlett Regional Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) requires several modifications to (1) implement current infection control and prevention standards, (2) improve throughput of patients and workflow, and (3) enhance patient and staff safety.

As the sole hospital ED for Juneau and numerous surrounding communities, the ED renovation will help the hospital meet the increased healthcare needs of its aging service population and the substantial influx of seasonal visitors.

- Bartlett has an estimated 96% market share of all ED visits in Juneau.
- Juneau's population age 75+ are expected to grow by 37% by 2025 and another 36% by 2030. The ED use rate nationwide of people age 75+ is 40% higher than the overall use rate.
- Cruise ships bring nearly 1.7M passengers and crew members each summer to Juneau.

#### 1) Implement Current Infection Control and Prevention Standards

- There are currently no permanent negative pressure rooms or airborne isolation rooms in the ED – both specialty room types are an infection control best practice, allowing the hospital to provide a safer care environment and reduce the likelihood of infectious disease transmission.
- Negative pressure rooms provide a space to care for a patient in a room with ventilation separate from the general hospital. The negative pressure insures limited contamination of the general hospital ventilation.
- Currently, when the door to a room is open, potentially contaminated air or other dangerous particles inside the room, such as COVID and Tuberculosis (TB), can flow outside into a non-contaminated space.
  - i. This need was highlighted during the COVID pandemic, in which portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters had to be placed in rooms where confirmed and suspected COVID patients were located. The HEPA filters are large and very loud, making it difficult to talk to the patient through a mask or powered air purifying respirator (PAPR), as well as navigate the room. There are other diseases that require negative pressure that can be seen in the ED, such as TB, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), and measles. Juneau is a port of call for cruise ships which bring people from all over the world, thus significantly increasing the risk of disease that would require a negative pressure room or airborne isolation room.

- The ED renovation will create both a permanent negative pressure room and an airborne isolation room (which has negative pressure air flow) to provide space to adequately care for airborne illnesses.

## 2) Improve Throughput of Patients and Workflow

- The ED has one dedicated psychiatric room. Oftentimes, an adjacent ED room must have all the removable items taken out of that room to provide a safer space for an additional psychiatric patient.
- In the current ED nurse's station, staff can only visualize three out of the four corridors. The fourth corridor (lacks line of sight) is where the one psychiatric room is located, as well as other patient rooms, and has no space for security presence. This creates a significant safety issue. Additionally, the Omnicell, which is a medication dispensing system, is located in the nurse's station in the same area as the emergency medical services (EMS) radios and staff workstations.
- The ED renovation will include a remodeled nurse's station with a 360-degree line of sight and the addition of a second dedicated psychiatric room. Both psychiatric rooms will be moved to the front of the ED for a clear line of sight and ease of access by staff and security.
- The ED renovation will also create a separate space for medication prep and dosing. This is imperative as research suggests that this practice can significantly reduce medication errors by allowing nurses to calculate doses and prepare medications without constant interruptions and distractions.

## 3) Enhance Patient and Staff Safety

- Currently, there is no dedicated space for security in the ED or the waiting room.
- In addition to the safety enhancements noted above, the ED renovation will include space for a security office in the waiting room. Security presence in ED waiting rooms acts as a deterrent against any potential violence and creates a sense of safety for both patients and staff. This is often a crucial safety measure in ED's due to the high stress environment and potential for people to escalate.

## **KEY FUNDING POINTS**

- Per CBJ procurement policy, to solicit proposals for the construction manager at risk (CMAR) construction contract, funding must be appropriated and set aside for this purpose.
- Currently, Bartlett has appropriated \$3.45M for the project, while the total project cost is estimated at \$12.3M.
- Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) funding in the amount of \$4M has been authorized, but those federal funds have not yet been disbursed from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).
- The Bartlett Board of Directors approved the appropriation of \$8.9M in Bartlett fund reserves for the execution of the Emergency Department Addition and Renovation project on July 23, 2024.
- Bartlett plans to fund the remaining \$4.85M from Bartlett fund reserves (\$8.3M total) while continuing to look for additional funding to help reduce the use of reserve funds.