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Construction begins on Le Bonheur Children's Hospital's \$95M expansion project

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A building permit was filed on Tuesday, April 25, with the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development to begin construction on the \$95.4 million expansion project announced by Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in July 2021.

The permit was filed by Turner Construction Co., the general contractor on the project, and provided some details on the project's construction, cost, and timeline.

According to the permit, the major scope of work will take place on the second floor with a cardiovascular intensive care unit (CVICU) and on the fourth floor where the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) will be located. The development will create space to relocate the hospital's blood bank to the ground floor; add the 31-



LE BONHEUR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Rendering of the \$95 million expansion announced by Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in July 2021.

bed, dedicated cardiovascular unit on the second floor; and add the 18-bed NICU expansion on the fourth floor.

The second floor will also house a satellite pharmacy; eight post-anesthesia care unit bays for surgery recovery; and a new MRI-guided cardiac catheterization lab. The permit also has details of more than 50,000 square feet of shell space distributed across multiple floors. There will be approximately 105,000 square feet of new construction and 24,000 square feet of renovations.

The multimillion-dollar expansion project will be completed in different phases, beginning in August. The construction and renovations will start with phase two, which includes work on the 13,250-square-foot south side CVICU on the second floor, a 12,500-square-foot mechanical space, and a 2,700-square-foot corridor space on the third floor.

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare is funding the expansion and the permit valued the current construction work at \$57.9 million.

Le Bonheur confirmed January 2024 as the expected completion date for the entire development. The hospital will remain open during the renovations, and contractors will take care to avoid any interruptions to the hospital's operations, according to the permit.

Along with Turner Construction as the general contractor, Gresham Smith will be the architect on the project and will also handle the interior design and structural and civil engineering. Smith Seckman Reid (SSR) Inc. will provide mechanical and electrical engineering. Local engineering firm, Innovative Engineering Services LLC, will handle plumbing and fire protection.

Expanding pediatric cardiovascular capacity has been a major focus area for the hospital since 2019 when Le Bonheur announced its initial expansion plans of its Heart Institute. At the time, the hospital was looking at 70,500 square feet of expansion and \$37.5 million in costs. Those plans, however, had to be put on hold when the pandemic hit.

Later, in mid-2021, Le Bonheur announced its largest expansion plan in a decade. At the time, Le Bonheur president and CEO Michael Wiggins said the addition will "have an impact for decades to come."

Le Bonheur COO Brandon Edgeron told MBJ in a statement that the current expansion is essential, given the growth their Heart Institute has experienced in the past seven years.

“Le Bonheur has added 21 new cardiologists since 2015. With advancements made over the past few years in health care, children are now showing better results, but that is also sometimes requiring longer hospital stays,” he said. “With the longer stay, additional capacity was needed.”

Aishwarya Airy

Data Reporter

Memphis Business Journal

