



**CLEVELAND COUNTY
RECOVERY PROGRAM**



**NORMAN
REGIONAL**
Health System

Cleveland County approves \$1 Million in ARPA funding to support health and safety upgrades at Norman Regional HealthPlex

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On Monday, July 31, 2023, Cleveland County Commissioners voted to award \$1 million to Norman Regional Health System (NRHS) in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funding to create additional treatment rooms for the emergency department, as part of NRHS' existing HealthPlex expansion construction project.

"Like all major health networks in the United States, the Norman Regional Health System (NRHS) was hit hard during the pandemic. Our employees, who we call healers, took unique and unprecedented reactive measures. Their courage and dedication saved many lives during the pandemic," said Richie Splitt, President and CEO of Norman Regional Health System. "Thanks to the ARPA funding awarded by our Cleveland County Commissioners, NRHS will be able to build out of seven emergency department treatment rooms, helping to ensure that NRHS will be prepared when another wave of COVID-19 or another life-threatening illness or event impacts our community. Thank you to the commissioners for allowing our healers to save more lives with an enhanced facility."

Investing ARPA dollars in this way creates long term health and economic impacts for the county as well. The HealthPlex hospital, in particular, has become a hub for people coming from across Cleveland County with its easy access from I-35 and the adjacent facilities surrounding that campus.

"Norman Regional is a great resource right here in our backyard," said Commissioner Rusty Grissom. "These improvements to the HealthPlex will enable the hospital to continue to serve our people throughout the county whether it's dealing with a pandemic or the day-to-day health needs."

The ability to fully build out seven additional emergency medicine rooms will enhance the care Norman Regional provides the community, said Aaron Boyd, MD, Intensivist and Chief Physician Executive.

"These rooms will be in great demand in future pandemic or mass casualty scenarios. If there's a future rapid influx of patients, these rooms would provide critical space for treatment," Boyd said.

The expansion of the HealthPlex hospital will create a new tower for patient care, more emergency treatment rooms, and a dedicated ambulatory care center. The hospital's design will also change to be more patient-friendly with a parking garage and concourse-style main entrance. The HealthPlex expansion will open to patients in summer of 2024. This project is part of the Inspire Health plan. Inspire Health will modernize healthcare in the community with improved access. Other projects in the Inspire Health plan include the freestanding Emergency Department in southeast Norman (Norman Regional Nine), a 48-bed behavioral health hospital, the revitalization of the Porter campus and a partnership with OU Health to bring a Stephenson Cancer Center site to the HealthPlex.

Any remaining ARPA funds will go towards the automation of a computerized positive/negative air pressure system in the new critical care patient care tower.



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“At the height of COVID, our staff engineers were forced to manually convert patient rooms to negative airflow rooms to help curb the spread of the airborne illness,” Boyd said. “This conversion was labor intensive and often led to rooms being completed just in time for new patients. Having a computerized positive/negative air pressure system will allow the engineers to quickly convert the patient rooms digitally, allowing Norman Regional to open up more rooms at a faster rate.”

NRHS’s mission is consistent with Cleveland County’s commitment to invest ARPA funds to support the overall health and resilience of the county and its residents.

“Our community asked us to focus the \$55 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funding on projects that would provide critical support for our residents while also improving infrastructure and mitigating the health and economic impacts of the pandemic,” said Commissioner Rod Cleveland. “This is the perfect example of how we can leverage those dollars to address a need and create long term impact for our county and the surrounding area.”

For more information about Cleveland County’s ARPA Recovery Plan, please visit: <https://clevelandcount yok.com/384/ARPA-Recovery-Program>.

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About Norman Regional Health System (NRHS)

Norman Regional Health System is a multi-campus system that serves the healthcare needs of south central Oklahoma. It is currently comprised of two acute-care hospitals in Norman, OK. The Norman Regional Porter campus, located on Porter Avenue, is licensed for 219 beds and offers a full range of services. The Norman Regional HealthPlex campus, on Interstate 35, is licensed for 168 acute care beds. The Health System also operates two freestanding emergency room plus facilities: Norman Regional Moore, in Moore, and Norman Regional Nine in southeast Norman.

Norman Regional Health System also provides outpatient diagnostic centers, emergency medicine services, physician services, centers of excellence, medical equipment supplies, a primary care network, telehealth services and employer health services. The Health System has grown to employ more than 3,500 people and have 356 physicians credentialed on the medical staff.

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About Cleveland County

Cleveland County covers more than 500 square miles and a steadily growing population of close to 300,000 people (2020 census), making it the third most populous county in Oklahoma.

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