



Bassett & Fox Pursue Next Level of Integration Provides Growth Strategy for Fox Hospital

Our Journey So Far

It has been six years since A.O. Fox Hospital joined Bassett Healthcare Network. In that time, Bassett and Fox have worked together to enhance the delivery of health care in the Oneonta region through the improvement of facilities, integration of services and expansion of specialty programs. Specific points of progress over the past couple of years include:

- Modernization of inpatient facilities at Fox Hospital; 53 private rooms offer patients a more personalized, healing environment
- Emergency Department improvements have shortened waiting times and enhanced the patient experience at Fox
- Integration of information technology services to provide Fox with the same electronic medical record platform available at all other network hospitals by spring of 2017
- Integration of pediatric services; Dr. Kwan Chan-House and Dr. William Fredette joined the Bassett Medical Group in 2015. They also continue to provide outpatient pediatric care at FoxCare Center
- Last year, Bassett consolidated its cataract surgery and urology programs in Oneonta to Fox locations

Specialty programs previously added or expanded as the result of the affiliation include general surgery and orthopedic, heart and cancer care with Bassett providers traveling to Fox facilities to provide services to patients.

In June of last year, Fox Hospital was awarded \$4.2 million under the state's Vital Access Provider Assurance Program (VAPAP). A requirement of the funding was that Bassett and Fox provide the NYS Department of Health (DOH) with the network's plan for helping the hospital adapt to the changing health care environment in a way that will assure long term strength. To facilitate the transformation ahead, the state is also recommending the establishment of a closer corporate tie between Bassett Medical Center and Fox Hospital. The organizations will be exploring how best to accomplish this in the coming months.

The Road Ahead

In March of this year, Fox Hospital received word from DOH that an application for \$21.4 million in Essential Health Care Provider Support Funding was approved. The bulk of the state grant will be

used for debt restructuring, paving the way for Bassett and Fox to pursue the proposed transformation plan submitted last fall to DOH in accordance with the VAPAP requirements. The transformation plan outlines the hospitals' next phase of integration efforts. Among the plan's key components:

- Establish an orthopedic center of excellence at Fox Hospital and consider expansion of other specialty services
- Increase medical and surgical inpatient transfers from other network hospitals to Fox Hospital
- Restructure the obstetrics/gynecology and maternity services at Fox Hospital in a way that retains prenatal care, post-pregnancy and general obstetrics care at Fox facilities in Oneonta
- Submit a certificate of need (CON) to DOH proposing to combine labor and delivery services into one program at Bassett Medical Center

It's estimated these and other changes proposed in the plan could provide an additional \$6 million in revenue to Fox Hospital annually.

Bassett Healthcare Network President and CEO Vance M. Brown, MD, noted, "When considered in aggregate, what the staff and leadership of the two hospitals have achieved over the past six years is impressive. We are committed to working together to accomplish this next phase of integration in order to achieve the operational efficiencies necessary to protect the availability of high quality patient care and the delivery of services to the population served by Bassett Healthcare Network."

A.O. Fox Hospital President Jeff Joyner said, "The plan Fox submitted to the state is the growth strategy we need to move forward in the current health care climate. The changes will transform our operations in a way that better positions Fox for the future. Given the demographics of the patients we serve in the Oneonta region, there are opportunities to expand our services in certain high-demand specialty areas. Orthopedics is one of the growth opportunities we plan to pursue. This would make optimal use of the 53 private rooms on the recently modernized inpatient unit."

The expansion of orthopedic services and any other services at Fox would be in addition to the programs currently in place at Bassett Medical Center in Cooperstown, which include joint replacement, a shoulder and sports medicine institute, comprehensive sports medicine program and a spine institute.

The proposal to combine labor and delivery services into a single program at Bassett would result in significant savings for Fox Hospital, which has continued to see a decline in births. Less than 250 babies were born at Fox Hospital in 2015 and less than 50 so far this year, while Bassett's program handles over 900 births annually. In fact, January 2016 was a record month for births with 104 babies born at Bassett Medical Center.

Features of the Bassett Birthing Center include an operating room, spacious labor-delivery-recovery rooms, and a "deliverist" service so that a physician who specializes in delivering babies is in-house 24/7. All newborns receive daily medical care from one of five very skilled inpatient nurse

practitioners (NPs). The NPs work in cooperation with the on-call pediatrician. Bassett has four highly experienced pediatricians who take call and are available for any pediatric emergency. In addition, integrating the two programs will also allow for potential expansion of diagnostic testing and high-risk pregnancy services.

Next Steps

Transition teams comprised of appropriate staff from both hospitals are being formed to begin the work of determining the best way to accomplish the proposed changes to the orthopedic and labor and delivery programs. This includes determining a timeline for implementation.

About A.O. Fox Hospital

A.O. Fox Memorial Hospital employs nearly 900 people and is a federally designated Sole Community Hospital due to the critical role it plays in providing access to essential health care services for people living in Oneonta and surrounding communities.

The hospital's primary service area encompasses a population of 45,000 and includes the City of Oneonta and parts of Otsego and Delaware counties.

In addition to inpatient hospital services, Fox also provides a broad spectrum of outpatient health care including emergency services, urgent care, family medicine/primary care, dental and other specialty care.

Last year, Fox Hospital admitted 2,764 patients, treated 15,717 patients in its emergency department and provided 91,934 patient visits in its primary care centers.

About Bassett Healthcare Network

Bassett Healthcare Network is an integrated health care system that provides care and services to people living in a 5,600 square mile region in upstate New York. In addition to A.O. Fox Memorial Hospital, the organization includes five other corporately affiliated hospitals, as well as skilled nursing facilities, health centers and health partners in related fields.

Bassett Medical Center, the foundation of the network, is a 180-bed acute care inpatient teaching facility in Cooperstown, New York, employing 3,000 people. The medical center offers a broad range of specialty care and maintains a strong academic program through its affiliation with Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. Bassett was formally established as a medical school campus of Columbia P&S in 2009. Learn more at bassett.org.