

## Get the Facts About Seattle Children's Expansion



Laurelhurst Community Club member Colleen McGinn's letter in the *Puget Sound Business Journal* included several **factual inaccuracies** in an effort to make Children's expansion plan appear excessive. We would like to correct the facts here:

- Children's is already running out of beds — the need for more space is real, and it is urgent.
- Children's Hospital Boston presently has 387 beds and plans to grow to nearly 500 beds over the next 10 years. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia just completed an expansion and grew from 381 beds to 430.
- In the past fiscal year alone, 978 children have been referred to Seattle Children's from other hospitals.
- After a lengthy two-year process, the CAC recommended approval of our growth plan. The city held 26 CAC meetings, and at least five sub-committee or working group meetings. The CAC consisted of 15 voting members, three alternates and one ex-officio from Seattle Children's. Eight of the 18 CAC members were from Laurelhurst.



## Some facts about

# Seattle Children's Expansion

As pediatrician-in-chief at Seattle Children's Hospital, I read the recent letter in the *Puget Sound Business Journal* from Laurelhurst Community Club member Colleen McGinn ("City should oppose Seattle Children's expansion plan," published October 9) with great dismay.

In her letter, McGinn claimed that our expansion plan is excessive, and that Children's has refused to work with the Laurelhurst Community Club.

The facts are crystal clear: We are at capacity and running out of beds. Delays to our expansion will put children's lives at risk. For all families throughout the region, this is unacceptable.

We are operating at or near capacity daily and we have yet to hit peak flu season. We've turned away 79 seriously ill children already this year because of lack of space. Our operating room is often forced to cancel and reschedule surgeries that families have been counting on for months.

Some have suggested that we should leave children out of the discussion around our expansion. Simply put — this IS about children — and many with complex medical needs like rare forms of cancer and cystic fibrosis that can only be met here. Imagine what it is like to tell a family that we have no bed for their sick or injured child.

For more than two years, we worked closely with our Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), which consisted of volunteer members from several neighborhoods. Eight of the 18 were from Laurelhurst. We incorporated their valuable input into our efforts, changing our expansion plans eight times to incorporate ideas from several parties and in the end, the community process worked — both the CAC and the City's Department of Planning and Development recommended approval of our growth plan.

Throughout this otherwise productive process, some Laurelhurst Community Club members have made endless demands, requested continuous changes, filed several legal appeals and voiced consistent opposition to our hospital's need to grow.

We would never propose a growth plan that exceeds our need. Furthermore, the state Department of Health wouldn't allow it, as they dictate how much we can build. According to multiple projections, Children's must grow from 250 beds to 336 beds by 2012. If not, there will be many days when more than 80 patients will not be able to receive needed care at Children's due to lack of space. Our plan for a total of 500 to 600 beds in 20 years is incremental; we will only build what we need.

On behalf of everyone in this region who relies on Seattle Children's and our mission, I ask for your support. We are at capacity and the time for us to grow is now. Delay will cost lives if we do not move forward with a hospital growth plan this year. We invite you to see for yourself the strain our lack of capacity places on our families by watching the short video at [masterplan.seattlechildrens.org](http://masterplan.seattlechildrens.org).

We would like to note that we have also received a great deal of support from the majority of Laurelhurst residents and we remain committed to being a good neighbor to the residents of Laurelhurst and to all of the communities in our area.

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