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Marion County stands with Wishard

Referendum for new hospital passes; project estimated to create 4,400 construction jobs per year through December 2013

INDIANAPOLIS – Marion County voters answered the Wishard referendum question with an emphatic “Yes” on Tuesday, voting to pass the referendum to approve construction of a new, modern and efficient Wishard Hospital on the campus of IUPUI.

“Wishard was there for us when we needed it most,” said Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department Sgt. Dennis Fishburn, whose son Ofc. Jason Fishburn was shot in the line of duty in 2008 before receiving life-saving treatment at Wishard. “It gives me great joy, peace and comfort to know that our community – our law enforcement officers and firefighters, doctors and nurses, business leaders and laborers, young and old, rich and poor – will have Wishard Hospital if ever – whenever – they need it.”

Of the 28,517 votes counted in Marion County at 9:39 p.m., a landslide 82 percent voted yes to pass the referendum on a new Wishard Hospital. This historic margin is believed to be the largest since such capital projects referenda began in 2008. A new facility will allow Wishard to continue its 150-year tradition of caring for the people of central Indiana.

“Indianapolis is a compassionate and humane community. Wishard exists because of our community’s values. These referendum results confirm our city’s commitment to ensuring that all our residents have access to high quality health care,” said Matthew Gutwein, Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County CEO. “A historic coalition came together to support Wishard. We are deeply appreciative of their leadership in supporting this project, and to the voters, who offered the most resounding confirmation with each of their sacred ballots, we offer heartfelt thanks.”

Approval of the construction project ensures a future for Wishard’s more than 4,000 workers and will also create more than 4,400 construction jobs annually, providing a much-needed shot in the arm to the building trades industry.

“While the focus has been on the care and teaching that Wishard provides, it’s important to note that the construction of the new hospital will create more than 4,400 jobs, maybe more over the course of the project,” said Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard. “This means new work for many of our hard-working citizens who will put their training and expertise into building this great new facility.”

The new Wishard is planned for a site currently owned by Indiana University on the IUPUI campus and is ideally located for patients, doctors, caregivers and students who practice on the IU Medical Center Campus, at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center and at Wishard. The new facilities will include a 303-bed hospital, outpatient clinic building, power plant, parking garage and facilities for medical education and research.

“We are very proud to be part of such a compassionate, caring community, and we’re enormously grateful for the support, trust and confidence Marion County voters have placed in Wishard today,” said Dr. Lisa Harris, CEO of Wishard Health Services. “We have shown the failings of our deteriorating facility at more than 200 community gatherings over the past several months, we have answered every question along the way, and we are excited to see this day – and this referendum – come to pass.”

The new Wishard Hospital is scheduled to be completed in 2013. A new facility will allow Wishard to maintain one of two Adult Level I Trauma Centers, the busiest emergency department, and the largest burn center in Indiana, as well as its role as the leading educator of future medical professionals. A new Wishard Hospital also extends Marion County’s safety net well into the 21st century.

The list of key supporters of a new Wishard Hospital includes U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar, U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, Indianapolis Mayor Gregory Ballard, State Sen. Patricia Miller, State Rep. Brian Bosma, and State Rep. Bill Crawford, past Indianapolis mayors Bart Peterson, Stephen Goldsmith, and William Hudnutt, former Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis, CEOs of several local hospitals including Daniel Evans of Clarian Health, Vincent Caponi of St. Vincent Health, Bryan Mills of Community Health Network, and Robert Brody of St. Francis Hospital & Health Centers, university leaders including Purdue University President Emeritus Martin Jischke, Indiana University President Michael McRobbie, Purdue University President France Cordova, Ivy Tech Community College President Tom Snyder, Butler University President Bobby Fong, Ball State University President Jo Ann Gora, University of Indianapolis President Beverley Pitts, Marian University President Dan Elsner, IUPUI Chancellor Charles Bantz and IUPUI Chancellor Emeritus Gerald Bepko, business advocacy and community groups including the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Urban League and the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, current and former public safety officials including the Honorable Carl Brizzi, Scott Newman, Chief Michael Spears, Chief Brian Sanford, Sheriff Frank Anderson, and former U.S. Attorneys Susan Brooks and Deborah Daniels, community leaders including Jim Morris of the Indiana Pacers, David Johnson of BioCrossroads, Alpha Blackburn of Blackburn Architects, Dennis Bassett of Chase Bank of Central Indiana, Joyce Rogers of Ivy Tech Community College, Joseph Slash of Urban League, Steve Sullivan of MIBOR, Marco Dominguez, Yvonne Shaheen of Long Electric, Carol D’Amico of Conexus Indiana and Tamara Zahn of Indianapolis Downtown, Inc., leaders in the faith community including Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith, Bishop Michael Coyner, Rev. Monsignor Joseph F. Schaedel, Rev. Fitzhugh Lyons Sr., Rev. Richard Willoughby, Rev. Kevin Armstrong, Elder Lionel T. Rush, Rabbi Dennis Sasso, Rev. Ernest Porter, Rabbi John Adland, Rev. Dick Hamilton, Imam Mohammed Sadiq and leading associations including the Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis, the Interdenominational Ministerial and Baptist Alliances, Concerned Clergy, leading individuals and organizations from the medical community including Dr. Craig Brater, Dean of the IU School of Medicine, Dr. Craig K. Svensson, Dean of the Purdue School of Pharmacy, Dr. Tom Inui of the Regenstreif Institute, Dr. Virginia Caine of the Marion County Health Department, Dr. Larry Goldblatt, Dean of the IU School of Dentistry, the board of directors of the American Red Cross of Greater Indianapolis, ARC of Indiana, Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis, St. Margaret’s Hospital Guild, and philanthropic leaders including Christel DeHaan, Frank and Katrina Basile, Dr. Chris Stack, and Robert L. Smith of Eli Lilly and Company Foundation.

“All of us at Wishard also would like to extend our gratitude to Beth White and her staff at the Clerk’s Office, to the Marion County Election Board and to all the election workers. Our election officials organized and conducted a flawless election in a year in which they did not think a countywide election would be needed,” said Gutwein.

Gutwein and Harris will greet Wishard employees prior to the start of the first shift at 7 a.m. on Wednesday to thank them for their support.

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