

Aurora Health Care to Invest Nearly \$50 Million for Collaborative Health and Wellness Center on Milwaukee's Near West Side

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MILWAUKEE – Aurora Health Care shared plans for a nearly \$50 million investment in The Beacon, a health and wellness hub to provide a wide range of programs aimed at empowering individuals and families to achieve physical, mental, and social wellness in Milwaukee. [The Beacon will be in the former Wisconsin Avenue School](#) at the intersection of 27th Street and Wisconsin Ave.

The name “The Beacon” was chosen because of its powerful symbolism as a guiding light. It also speaks to Milwaukee’s rich history where lighthouses and beacons have long served as crucial landmarks, helping people navigate and find their way safely. The Beacon reflects our mission to be a steady and reliable source of support, offering guidance to those in need.

Aurora will bring key partners together at The Beacon to provide access to a variety of experts who will offer the interventions needed most, including programs related to prenatal and postnatal virtual care, violence prevention, eviction support and housing assistance, fresh food access, chronic disease prevention, early childhood education programming and more. This is another way Aurora demonstrates its commitment to supporting the health and wellness of our communities and provides over \$1 billion in charity care and services every year.

The Beacon fulfills a pledge made when Aurora Health Care, along with Advocate Health Care in Illinois, combined with Atrium Health to create Advocate Health. Through The Beacon, Advocate Health’s National Center for Clinical and Community Impact will expand evidence-based practices to address care gaps and enhance health outcomes for all. This new name underscores our forward-looking approach to creating meaningful impact and actionable changes in the communities we serve.

“Everybody deserves the opportunity to achieve physical, mental and social wellness, and have the resources available in their own neighborhood,” said Rayna Andrews, Managing Director of The Beacon. “In Milwaukee, there is a 13-year life expectancy gap between those in the near west side and the northeast side – two communities located just five miles apart. We are committed to changing that. The Beacon will help further address our neighbors’ most pressing needs under one roof – removing barriers to care by creating pathways for individuals and families to improve their lives.”

Programming at The Beacon is being developed as a direct result of an extensive community input process. Over many months, more than 200 neighbors and 40

community organizations participated in 14 community listening sessions. Additional community listening sessions are scheduled in the months ahead to further refine the service offerings, as well as the design of the building.

“Investment from Aurora in this prime location will not only transform the vacant building into a space where Milwaukeeans can improve their lives, it will also further momentum on 27th Street to continue revitalization of the Near West Side,” said Alderman Robert Bauman, who represents the district where the Beacon is located.

The Beacon builds on Aurora’s longstanding commitment to Milwaukee’s near west side. In 2014, Aurora joined with fellow anchor institutions Harley-Davidson, Marquette University, Molson Coors, and Potawatomi Ventures to help found Near West Side Partners (NWSP), a nonprofit dedicated to supporting Milwaukee’s near west side as a great place to live, work, and play. In 2024, Aurora Health Care celebrated alongside NWSP, anchor institutions, and community partners as Concordia 27 was opened at the intersection of 27th and Wells Streets – just one block from the planned site of The Beacon.

“As one of our five founding anchor institutions, Aurora Health Care understands our vision for the near west side and the transformational and catalytic effect this development will have on the surrounding neighborhood,” said Lindsey St Arnold Bell, Executive Director, Near West Side Partners. “This mixed-use, community wellness-focused development would continue the momentum generated by Concordia 27, furthering NWSP’s plans for 27th Street to become a collaborative Health and Wellness Corridor and advance the Near West Side Comprehensive Plan.”

Aurora plans to maintain the historic integrity of the building while redeveloping the interior into a reimagined space where neighbors can access life-improving programs and services.

Aurora is committed to working with local partners, including the City of Milwaukee, to advance plans for The Beacon and hopes to break ground in Spring 2026 and open in Spring 2027. As a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization, Aurora is pleased to have reached an agreement with the City of Milwaukee to address the deed restriction on the property in order to move this important community investment forward.

Community Excitement: What Others Are Saying

Mayor Cavalier Johnson, City of Milwaukee: “I am pleased this project is moving forward. It will add vitality to the neighborhood and renewed activity at this important intersection. Just as importantly, the work taking place here will improve the wellbeing of individuals on the near west side – and throughout the city.”

Leif Elsmo, President & CEO, Centers for Independence: "Aurora’s proposed health and wellness hub represents exactly what the near west side neighborhood needs – a forward-thinking approach to community well-being. By coordinating resources that support total health under one roof, we're not just building a facility, we're nurturing a healthier, more vibrant community. I'm particularly excited about the collaborative spirit driving this initiative, with local healthcare providers, community organizations, and elected officials all working together to make this vision a reality. This hub will be a

game-changer for residents, offering education and access to resources that supports the whole person."

Media Contact:

Cheri Mantz

Cheri.mantz@aah.org

414-507-1874

About Aurora Health Care

[Aurora Health Care](#) is the largest health system in Wisconsin and a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care. The state's largest private employer, the system serves patients across 18 hospitals, more than 70 pharmacies and more than 150 sites of care. Aurora Health Care, in addition Advocate Health Care in Illinois and [Atrium Health](#) in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, is part of [Advocate Health](#), the third-largest nonprofit, integrated health system in the United States. Committed to redefining care for all, Advocate Health provides more than \$6 billion in annual community benefits.