



Virginia Mason Franciscan Health Launches State's First Hybrid ER and Urgent Care Center

Innovative Model Will Streamline Patients' Experience and Relieve Strain on Hospitals

Tacoma and Seattle, Wash. (Aug. 4, 2022) — Today, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health (VMFH) announced it will build the state's first hybrid ER/urgent care center in Bremerton, Wash. It will be the first of multiple hybrid facilities VMFH plans to open in the Puget Sound region over the next four years using [Intuitive Health](#)'s innovative care model of offering emergent and urgent care in a single location.

The unique nature of the hybrid ER/urgent care model eliminates the guesswork for patients unsure of where to go for care. A patient can simply present to the facility and a board-certified emergency physician will examine and triage them to the appropriate level of care based on their need. Patients will only be billed for the level of services they actually receive, which helps manage their costs.

"The healthcare industry is experiencing unprecedented challenges including rising costs of care, staffing shortages and capacity issues in our emergency departments that have all been exacerbated by the pandemic," said Ketul J. Patel, CEO, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health. "To address these ongoing challenges, health systems have a responsibility to develop new ways to improve health for everyone in the community, including innovative solutions for care delivery. We are proud to launch the state's first hybrid ER and urgent care facility."

It is estimated that more than [30% of ER visits](#) in the United States are for non-urgent conditions. These unnecessary ER visits divert resources away from patients with potentially life-threatening conditions, increase wait times and drive up health care costs for everyone. The new hybrid ER/urgent care facilities will funnel non-urgent cases away from hospital-based emergency rooms as well as provide additional capacity and access to high-quality emergency care throughout the community.

"Our innovative care model simplifies the patient experience – patients no longer need to choose between the emergency department and the local urgent care center," said Thom Herrmann, CEO of Intuitive Health. "Virginia Mason Franciscan Health's new combined Emergency and Urgent Care facilities will expand the health system's ambulatory footprint across the Puget Sound and ultimately allow them to care for more patients, closer to home."

The Bremerton hybrid ER/urgent care center will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, equipped with onsite lab equipment and a radiology suite with X-ray and multi-slice CT scanners. Bremerton was selected as the first location, following the transition of St. Michael Medical Center from Bremerton to Silverdale. Work on the new facility is underway and slated to be completed in spring 2023.

We are proud that the new hybrid ER and urgent care facility ensures that we are keeping our promise to the community to maintain urgent care services locally in Bremerton. This facility is complemented by the VMFH Family Medicine Clinic next door, which offers comprehensive preventative medical care services and St. Michael Medical Center in Silverdale, which is the regional hub for quality health care for the Kitsap Peninsula. The hospital provides comprehensive acute care including a Level III Trauma Center, specialty care and primary care to Kitsap residents close to home," said Chad Melton, president of St. Michael Medical Center.

VMFH, in collaboration with Intuitive Health leaders, is working to identify locations for other hybrid ER/urgent care centers that will best meet the needs of the Puget Sound region.

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About Virginia Mason Franciscan Health

Virginia Mason Franciscan Health is a world-class health system serving the Pacific Northwest, offering access to some of the country's most prestigious experts and hospitals that are internationally recognized for superior quality. Our expansive system builds upon the strength of more than 300 sites of care, including 11 top-tier hospitals, 18,000 team members, and 5,400 employed physicians, advance practice providers (APPs) and community providers to improve the health of our communities. Together we deliver easily accessible, instantly responsive and digitally connected patient-centric care.

By bringing together the brightest health care minds through Benaroya Research Institute, a global leader in autoimmune disease and immune system research, we deliver the most advanced therapies and technologies for our patients. We are also proud to be the home of Bailey-Boushay House, the first skilled-nursing and outpatient chronic care management program in the United States designed specifically to meet the needs of people with HIV/AIDS. We are committed to addressing health care disparities by caring for the most vulnerable in our communities, including the poor and underserved, providing more than \$300 million in community benefit – free, subsidized, and reduced cost health care and programs. Learn more at www.vmfh.org.

About Intuitive Health

Founded in 2008, Intuitive Health pioneered the combined emergency room and urgent care model. Intuitive Health partners with established health systems nationwide to build, operate and launch retail health care facilities that provide urgent care and emergency room services under one roof. Intuitive Health operates in partnership with leading health systems across the country including in the states of Florida, Indiana, Ohio, Delaware, Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arizona, Texas and Washington. Intuitive's patient-centric approach to immediate care has saved payors and patients hundreds of millions of dollars in unnecessary emergency care spend. The Intuitive Health model increases market share for partnered health care systems by expanding their footprint with conveniently located centers. For more information, please visit IHERUC.com.

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