

Healthcare company CareOregon purchases hotel for rural healthcare workforce housing in Northwest Oregon

Project will create 50-60 housing units, with two-thirds of units reserved for healthcare workforce. Remaining units will offer permanent supportive housing.

PORTLAND, OR, UNITED STATES, March 8, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, healthcare

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organization [CareOregon](#) announced that it has purchased the Red Lion Inn & Suites in Seaside and will begin converting it into housing for the region’s healthcare workforce and Oregon Health Plan members with behavioral health needs. [Columbia Pacific CCO](#), which is part of the CareOregon family, will operate the housing with its local partners Clatsop Behavioral Health and Clatsop Community Action.

“Over the past several years as we’ve engaged in conversations about what our region needs to be healthy,

we’ve continuously heard that housing is among our greatest needs,” said Mimi Haley, Columbia Pacific CCO executive director. “Converting the Red Lion into housing for providers and community members is part of a larger strategy to improve overall community health.”

The project is filling a unique need by creating both workforce and permanent supportive housing. By providing market rate units for providers serving the region, Columbia Pacific is helping address a critical barrier that prevents healthcare and social service organizations from attracting new staff to the region. Approximately two-thirds of units will be reserved for workforce housing.

“Our hospital often loses potential employees because of the lack of available housing in our region,” said Pam Cooper, Providence Seaside Hospital director of finance. “We have staff driving in from Tillamook County and Washington state. It’s challenging, especially when folks are ‘on call’ and need to be able to respond within 30 minutes of being called to come in. I spend a lot of my time trying to find leases, find rooms, make arrangements with AirBnBs so we can have our shifts covered. The investment from CareOregon and Columbia Pacific is going to help us address this need.”

The remaining one-third of the units will be dedicated as permanent supportive housing for Columbia Pacific members with behavioral health needs. By providing permanent supportive housing units, Columbia Pacific is creating long term housing for individuals at risk of homelessness. Clatsop Behavioral Health will provide onsite housing assistance for these community members with the goal of creating a safe, stable environment where residents get the support they need to stay housed, and are able to stay engaged with their healthcare providers.

“The per capita rate of homelessness here in Clatsop County is the highest in the state and by a long shot” said Amy Baker, Clatsop Behavioral Health executive director. “It's six times the state average and 4.6 times Multnomah County's per capita rate of homelessness. So, being able to provide permanent supportive housing, it's going to make a tremendous difference in our community. Importantly, access to housing for our employees will be a gamechanger. Our agency loses about 30% of the applicants in our job pipeline because of lack of housing. We need more access to housing here on the coast. This project is part of the solution.”

By converting an existing building into housing, CareOregon will be able to create housing units for roughly half of the cost of a new build and on an accelerated timeframe. Current construction estimates anticipate opening the building to residents by spring 2024.

“Throughout our nearly three decades of existence, CareOregon has made big investments in programs and services that can make an impact in the lives of those we serve,” said Eric C. Hunter, CareOregon CEO. “Rolling up our sleeves and working alongside community is how we approach everything we do. We're honored to be able to leverage our dollars to help meet local needs in the Columbia Pacific region.”

Columbia Pacific's focus on housing investment is a direct result of and in response to community feedback. Access to safe, affordable housing was identified in our [2019-2024 Regional Health Improvement Plan](#) as a top priority across our region. More than 1,900 community members provided feedback to inform this plan.

About CareOregon: For more than 25 years, CareOregon has offered health services and community benefit programs to Oregon Health Plan members. Today, we support the needs of more than 500,000 Oregonians through three coordinated care organizations, a Medicare Advantage plan, a Tribal Care Coordination program, a dental care organization, and in-home medical care with Housecall Providers. CareOregon members have access to integrated physical, dental and mental health care, and substance use treatment.

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