
healthcare design

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Hard Hat Tour Of The Largest Healthcare Construction Project In The U.S.

By Kristin D. Zeit, Editor-in-Chief

I was in Dallas last week for the [Healthcare Design Academy](#), where a team of highly invested players working on the replacement facility for [Parkland Memorial Hospital](#) gave an in-depth presentation on the project's progress. Their mood was upbeat, and with good reason: Parkland had been [on the brink of losing its Medicare and Medicaid funding](#)—which would have been genuinely devastating for the health system and Dallas County at large—but had just received word, the day before, that the hospital had passed its final inspections and was safe.

So if the workers on-site at the billion-dollar project last Friday seemed to have an extra spring in their step, well, you couldn't blame them. The replacement hospital is due to complete construction in a year. It's the largest healthcare construction project in the country, and—as it's been funded largely by the public—the work has faced considerable scrutiny from the local media.

The team behind the project, however, has been quite forthcoming in its descriptions of the various stages of operational, architectural, and design planning as they've evolved over the past five years. Their session at HCD Academy felt very honest—sharing the good and the bad—and, more important, *useful* to anyone in our field.

The sheer enormity of this project makes it tremendously valuable from a research perspective, so it's great that the entire design team seems to have a "no question is off-limits" mentality. Lots of attendees took them up on that, during both the sessions and the site tour on Friday morning.

It's one thing to read the statistics: 64 acres; 2.7 million square feet; 100,000-square-foot emergency department; 865 patient beds. I've seen the renderings, watched the videos, and heard more than one presentation from the Parkland team. And still, walking onto the site in my hard hat and "visitor"-emblazoned safety vest, I couldn't help uttering "whoa," practically in unison with the 50-plus designers, architects, and other industry pros on the tour with me.

Led by [Walter Jones](#), Parkland's senior vice president of facilities planning and development (and a *Healthcare Design* editorial advisory board member), the tour was thorough, enlightening, and impressive. I think I'll let the photos do the talking—just click on the image above to scroll through the gallery. Special thanks to tour-mate Robert Treat of [Lillibridge Healthcare Services Inc.](#) for supplementing my iPhone shots with some of his own.

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