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From the Milwaukee Business Journal:
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Medical College extends planning period for central city project as it seeks community input

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The Medical College of Wisconsin delayed by six months a vote by its board on a proposed 100,000- to 150,000-square-foot facility on Milwaukee’s north side that will house organizations endeavoring to improve the overall health and safety of central city residents.



SCOTT PAULUS
 Dr. John Raymond chatted with guests at the Milwaukee Business Journal Power Breakfast.

When Medical College officials announced the initiative in January, they said they would finalize a recommendation by May for a preferred location, establish a budget and determine ownership of the facility. The initial plans called for the private medical college’s board of trustees to vote in June on whether to proceed.

The updated schedule calls for presenting a recommendation to the Medical College board in December, Medical College president and CEO Dr. John Raymond said. The facility, which is called the Center for Flourishing Lives, would house community-facing Medical College units as well as other organizations dedicated to the health and well-being of Milwaukee’s low-income residents.

“I still would like to do it by the end of the year,” Raymond said at the Milwaukee Business Journal’s June 15 Power Breakfast.

Raymond said the main reason for the delay is the need to hear more feedback from community stakeholders before proceeding.

“When we started talking to the community, they said ‘You’re going too quickly — if you don’t listen to us, if you don’t give us the time to tell you what we really need — the initiative isn’t going to have the maximum impact,’” Raymond said. “So we listened.”

The Medical College of Wisconsin, which has its main campus in Wauwatosa, hired Milwaukee commercial real estate developer Kevin Newell’s Royal Capital Group in March as a site-selection consultant. The college continues to work with Royal Capital Group to vet options for the most viable sites but a site has not yet been selected, Raymond said.

“[Kevin Newell](#) is helping us refine our planning partnership with those communities that we hope to serve,” Raymond said.

Despite the delay in presenting recommendations to the Medical College board, MCW officials will “continue to be aggressive with our timeline,” but a new starting date has yet to be determined, said spokeswoman Holly Botsford. The initial schedule called for developing the structure by summer or fall of 2019.

The Medical College intends to locate the Center for Flourishing Lives in a community with the greatest health disparities, which is Milwaukee’s north side African-American community.

As for the Medical College’s next steps in attaining community feedback, the college soon will begin engaging with community organizations, including those that focus on social services, community building, education and health, Raymond said.

Medical College representatives already have met with not-for-profit entities that focus on social determinants of health. Those include foundations, community-based groups, health care entities, elected officials, academic institutions and neighborhood leaders, Raymond said.

So far, the feedback for the concept has been extremely supportive, Raymond said. Among the primary themes that have emerged so far are obtaining broad community involvement and avoiding duplication of efforts, he said.

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