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Oakland County creates program to market medical systems

Jennifer Chambers / The Detroit News

PONTIAC -- Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson announced the creation of a medical branding initiative among major hospital systems, medical device manufacturers and higher education in Oakland County that could lead to billions of dollars in new investment and thousands of new jobs.

Oakland County is tentatively referring to this consortium of health care as "Oakland Medical."

The initiative focuses on the county's abundant medical and life science industry which boasts some of the top hospitals, universities and medical device companies in the United States. The county, along with William Beaumont Hospitals, McLaren Health Care Corp. and Oakland University, commissioned a study from the Lansing-based Anderson Economic Group to examine the strength of the life science industry in Oakland County and the potential for growth. It concluded the county could add 45,000 jobs in the next 10 years, making it one of the largest employment sectors in Oakland County.

"There is a trend here," Patterson said. "As we looked at our Economic Outlook report, coupled with the success of the Emerging Sectors program, it became clear that the medical sector should be targeted for expansion," Patterson said. "The study confirmed what we sensed. Life sciences could go right off the charts in Oakland County. It could mean billions of dollars of investment and thousands of new jobs."

The Anderson study predicted that the average annual wage for the 45,000 new jobs would be about \$50,000 but medical research jobs in the \$80,000-\$90,000 would be targeted. The county ranks first in the state in the number of pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing (10), medical equipment and supplies manufacturing (62) and medical office clusters (3,274).

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