

Investments in Oakland County's Medical Main Street far surpass total of program's first 3 years

By [Chad Halcom](#)



Oakland County's **Medical Main Street** program enjoyed a busy 2011, with commitments to invest a combined \$185.2 million and add nearly 1,500 jobs — more than triple the total investment of the previous three years.

Fourteen companies invested to locate or expand operations in Oakland County during 2011, adding more than 1,380 jobs and retaining about 280 existing jobs. That compares with 10 deals to invest less than \$27 million and create 553 jobs from the inception of the program in 2008 through the end of 2010.

The county also will host an inaugural Medical Main Street conference Oct. 4 at the **Royal Park Hotel** in downtown Rochester, said Irene Spanos, director of economic development and community affairs for Oakland County.

The national conference is expected to draw 200 to 300 industry guests from dozens of companies and allow medical device manufacturers and service companies to meet with physicians, hospitals and other buyers to talk about next-generation product needs and the state of the industry.

Some of the largest 2011 investments were anticipated hospital expansions. They include **St. Joseph Mercy Oakland's** beginning construction in Pontiac on an eight-story, \$129 million patient tower with 136 private rooms on the site of its former parking garage and **DMC Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital's** building a \$7 million orthopedic unit in Commerce Township.

Excluding hospitals, Spanos said, the program has seen a bit more traction in landing information technology service companies and medical device manufacturers than some other medical science segments, such as pharmaceutical companies. But the county has seen at least a little movement in all the life sciences.

Two of the larger investment deals in the county were previously announced by the **Michigan Economic Growth Authority** early in the year, but most were attractions with county assistance and little or no state role.

"Some of it is the market improving, but some of it is also the result of having a little time for brand building for the region to begin to pay off," Spanos said of the investment growth.

Medical Main Street is an alliance of hospitals, universities, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers and medical professionals. It was founded in 2008 by Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson to cultivate economic development and build brand awareness of the county among national life sciences companies as a "destination" health care community.

Other investments:

- **CareTech Solutions**, a Troy-based health care information technology and management services provider, which recently completed the second phase of an expansion totaling \$28 million. The company expects to add more than 400 local jobs.
- **Summit Health Inc.**, a Southfield-based wellness services company, which will invest \$11.4 million and add 252 jobs over the next five years on a major building expansion and relocation to Novi.
- **Ascendant Mdx Inc.**, a laboratory company providing obstetrical and genetic testing services, which will spend up to \$3.7 million and add up to 162 jobs by 2015 in one of the vacant West Tech Park buildings in Farmington Hills.
- **Total Repair Express**, which plans to spend \$1.2 million in Orion Township and add up to 100 local jobs after relocating its company headquarters from New Jersey.
- **GloStream Inc.**, a Bloomfield Hills-based electronic medical records vendor and consulting firm, which will invest \$1.4 million and add up to 40 jobs.
- **Sentio LLC**, a Southfield-based startup developer of a nerve-mapping device for noninvasive or minimally invasive spinal surgeries. It will invest \$500,000 and add up to 30 local jobs and retain two after attracting some venture capital funding.
- **Innovative Surgical Solutions**, a Royal Oak-based maker of a system to monitor nerves during minimally invasive surgeries, which will spend \$500,000 and add up to 30 jobs.
- **MatchRx**, a Royal Oak-based online store that allows pharmacies to buy and sell overstocked items. It will invest \$250,000 and add up to 20 local jobs after attracting some interest from venture capital funds during the year.
- **Supplement Group Inc.**, a Madison Heights-based contract manufacturer of vitamins and nutrients, which will spend \$1.7 million on improvements and add up to 10 local jobs.
- **Intrinsic Medical Imaging Inc.**, a Bloomfield Hills-based maker of real-time 3D medical visualization and image analysis software. It will spend \$150,000, add five jobs and retain 17.