

Consumer-focused Hospital Planned for Cincinnati Suburb

by Russell Boniface
Associate Editor

The new 370,000 square-foot West Chester Medical Center in West Chester, Ohio, a suburb of Cincinnati, brings to its design a two-story rotunda for increased wayfinding that leads to medical services clustered in a retail-style arc. The design, by Dallas-based RTKL Associates Inc. for Cincinnati-based Health Alliance, focuses on convenience for both patients and staff. The \$207-million project will be developed in three phases: a five-story, 160-private-bed hospital; a four-floor medical office building; and finally an additional 144-bed tower, medical office building, and 1200-car parking garage. Ground was broken in July and completion of phases one and two is scheduled for the end of 2008.

Designed for comfort, convenience

The West Chester Medical Center will be built on the existing University Pointe Surgical Hospital campus, north of Cincinnati. The hospital's architectural design concentrates on convenient patient access and treatment rather than a hands-off

model that moves patients from one department to another. The facility has been arranged so that related medical services are clustered together for increased accessibility and wayfinding for inpatients, outpatients, and staff. Examples include:

Diagnostic and treatment areas located in a simple radial arc directly off the rotunda, just as shops in a mall are located directly off a central core

- Imaging services clustered and located next to the emergency department
- Outpatient services easily accessible to visitors on the ground floor location
- Clear visual organization to help visitors easily find their destinations.

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"Patients and families will be at the heart of our care," says Carol A. King, senior vice president of West Chester

Medical Center. "Starting with the architectural layout, every aspect of the hospital is being developed to maximize patient and family comfort and convenience."

Color, alcoves highlight stress-free features

In addition to the latest advances in medical technology, the physical environment will foster a relaxing feeling, with stress-relieving alcoves throughout the hospital and a palette of colors and textures for a warm, comfortable atmosphere. The hospital will also have a walking path around the site, workout areas for staff and visitors, and large, private comfortable patient rooms that will accommodate family members.

"The new facility will be built in a consumer friendly setting," says Brad Barker, AIA, RTKL senior vice president in charge of the project. "The population of West Chester and its nearby suburbs is expected to continue to grow dramatically over the next 10 years. This is creating a demand for health-care services from consumers who want high-quality care in a conveniently located hospital."

The West Chester Medical Center is the first full-service hospital to be built from the ground up in Greater Cincinnati in more than 25 years and is expected to bring over 800 new jobs to the area. Phase three of the project, an additional bed tower, medical office building, and parking garage, is planned for a future date.

