

Building to begin again at nonprofit health clinic

Expansion price tag will be about \$13 million

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Neighborhood Health Clinic is ready to kick up construction activity again.

The nonprofit organization that provides a medical home for uninsured Collier County residents hopes to soon start the third phase of an expansion to address patient needs and population growth.

The cost is nearly \$13 million for all four phases of the strategic growth plan. So far, \$11 million has been raised.

The expansion is tied to the 2014 purchase of two acres south of the clinic located between Goodlette-Frank Road and Twelfth Street North. The clinic's address is 88 12th St. N.

The earlier phases involved an 8,400-square-foot addition and renovation to the existing building. The phase-two addition to the south side of the clinic added separate space for dental care and radiology and a larger waiting room.

The third phase involves an 8,000-square-foot addition to add space on the first floor for more radiology services and to add a second floor to the Armstrong Medical Building.

The additional radiology is for women's services, and the second floor addition is for specialty services in the realm of gynecological services; wound care; cardiology; ear, nose and throat; and procedures, said Leslie Lascheid, chief executive officer.

Her parents, Nancy Lascheid and the late Dr. William Lascheid, founded the clinic in 1999 to serve low-income and uninsured working residents of Collier County. Patients are not billed yet are asked to make a contribution, typically \$20 a month.

The clinic had more than 11,000 patient visits and performed more than 27,000 outpatient and non-emergency procedures in 2018. It operates with a nearly all-volunteer force of 300 medical, dental and nursing professionals.

Neighborhood does not accept any government funding; its annual budget of \$2.7 million comes entirely from individual donations, foundations, grants, businesses, churches and civic organizations.

The phase-three expansion should take eight months with completion targeted in July 2020, Leslie Lascheid said.

The fourth and final phase of the campus expansion will involve construction of the Van Domelen Education and Wellness Building with classrooms, meeting room and demonstration kitchen to expand preventive health education.

The plan is to start construction of the education building next summer, she said.

The first floor of the Armstrong Medical Building was done in phase two and the second floor addition is getting underway soon.

The building is possible through private philanthropic support from C. Michael Armstrong, retired chairman of the board of trustees at Johns Hopkins Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland. Armstrong is the retired chairman of Comcast Corporation and serves on Neighborhood's board of directors.

In a statement, Armstrong said he is excited about the medical building and the ability to save more lives out of the 50,000 patients in Collier eligible to be served by Neighborhood.

The building is for expanding gynecological services, heart care, radiology and other services, he said.

The gynecology program has experienced tremendous growth, and the additional space will provide more privacy for patients, Nancy Lascheid said.

"We have a strong team of gynecologists," she said. "We can provide gynecological care every day."

The changes from the third phase of the project will go a long way toward improving the patient experience, she said.

"We are functioning," Nancy Lascheid said. "We can do better and are prepared to do better."

Supporters of the clinic will celebrate the expansion and the fundraising campaign at an invitation-only event Tuesday, Nov. 19.

Dr. Robert Tober, medical director of Neighborhood, who oversees wound care services, said the revamped wound care area will be more comfortable for patients as wounds are cleansed and treated.

"It's sort of like what we try to do in an emergency room," Tober said.

Most of the clinic's patients who need wound care have lower extremity wounds that need addressing, he said.

The clinic does not handle emergency wounds; for that, patients need to go to an urgent care center or emergency room, he said.

Dr. Clare Ventre, a volunteer gynecologist at Neighborhood since 2014, when she retired from her private practice in Waterbury, Connecticut, said the next phase of the expansion will improve privacy.

“It will be a lot quieter and a less public space so there will be more privacy for patients,” Ventre said.

Neighborhood patients are very appreciative of the care they receive, something that Ventre didn’t experience as much with her private practice in Connecticut.

“It was a very pleasant surprise,” she said, adding that Neighborhood is run exceedingly well. “It is a tremendous asset to the community.”

For more information about Neighborhood Health Clinic and to support it, contact Keith Maples, chief development officer at 239-529-2264 or visit NeighborhoodHealthClinic.org.



Phase three of an expansion of Neighborhood Health Clinic in Naples is the addition of the second floor of the building at left. The rendering includes the future phase-four addition of an education building, at right. SUBMITTED

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