

COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

EXCLUSIVE REPORTS

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MidOhio Cardiology opens \$8.3M facility next to McConnell center

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Business First

Physicians at MidOhio Cardiology and Vascular Consultants think they finally have a facility in lockstep with their practice's national reputation in heart care.

The 19-doctor group recently left its overcrowded quarters for a new 59,000-square-foot building at 3705 Olentangy River Road next to the McConnell Heart Health Center.

The \$8.3 million structure, financed by MidOhio's 12 partners, includes clinical space and offices for its 105 employees.

"We needed a facility to match one of the top handful of programs in the country in terms of (patient) volume, experience and national recognition," said Dr. Anthony Chapekis, president of the physicians group.

Founded in 1987, MidOhio has been a pioneer in interventional cardiology, which includes angioplasties and stent implants in clogged arteries.

Its physicians continue to participate in numerous national trials of new techniques and medical devices, said Suzanne Inglis, MidOhio's executive director.

"We're almost always involved in the same clinical trials as the Mayo Clinic and Cleveland Clinic for national studies," she said. "That has helped put this group in the forefront in this state."

Inglis said the doctors also have their own research foundation, MidWest Cardiology Research Foundation, which employs 25.

MidOhio is also a leading player in the business mix at nearby Riverside Methodist Hospital. Its physicians typically have performed nearly 70 percent of the nonsurgical cardiology procedures at Riverside, hospital officials said.

OhioHealth feeder

Proximity to Riverside's campus was one of the key reasons MidOhio placed its building next to the McConnell Heart Health Center, which, like Riverside, is owned by OhioHealth.

"We thought long and hard about the location and what to build," Chapekis said. "We chose this site partly because of logistical issues. So much of our practice is hospital-based."

MidOhio is leasing the land on which the building sits from OhioHealth. The physicians' real estate arm, Heart Property LLC, owns the building.

Chapekis said MidOhio had been courted by out-of-town companies interested in starting heart hospitals in Columbus.

But the physicians chose to stick with OhioHealth, which is building a heart hospital that is scheduled to open in 2004 on the Riverside campus.

"We've had our ups and downs (with Riverside)," Chapekis said, "but we both agreed that most things that are good for us are good for the institution. We've found a lot of common ground and are trying to work together."

Another MidOhio physician, Dr. John Hummel, sees it that way as well.

"It all marries very nicely if we stay at this location," Hummel said. "When you put together the new heart hospital, the McConnell Center and our new clinic and testing facilities, it provides our patients with world-class cardiovascular care in a very accessible setting."

Leading-edge technology

He is especially pleased with the building's infrastructure for technology.

For example, it will be able accommodate leading-edge equipment that allows his staff to test patients' pacemakers and defibrillators via the Internet.

"Medical technology is moving so quickly," Hummel said. "The ability to integrate it into your practice is reliant on your ability to get technology into the physical plant where the doctors and patients are coming and going."

The building includes two nuclear cameras for diagnostic testing, clinical space for stress tests and echocardiograms, a center to check pacemakers and defibrillators and 15 examination rooms.

It will also be able to house a vascular medicine clinic being launched by the practice, Inglis said.

The building's lower level has been set aside for a diagnostic cardiac catheterization lab that MidOhio hopes to operate someday.

But that will likely not happen until Ohio legislators change a state law that requires cardiac cath procedures be done only in hospitals, Inglis said.

"We'd like to do that here," he said. "We feel it would be a better experience for the patient from a time and efficiency standpoint. The state doesn't support that yet."

MidOhio left behind clinical space it leased at 3400 Olentangy River Road and a business office it rented on the Riverside campus. They totaled about 18,000 square feet, which is less than half of what MidOhio will eventually occupy in its new building.

"This essentially allows us to bring two separate staffs together," Inglis said. "That will lead to better efficiencies and better utilization of space."

The new site also features ample parking for patients and employees. That was sorely lacking at MidOhio's former clinic, Inglis said, where staff members parked at remote lots and rode a shuttle to work.

About 12,000 square feet of leasable shell space for medical tenants was incorporated into the building designed by Andrews Architects of Dublin. KPRS O'Brien Construction Services was the builder, with construction management provided by Prime Medical Group.

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