

COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

EXCLUSIVE REPORTS

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Cardiology group to pump \$8M into new med facility

Jeff Bell
Business First

One of Central Ohio's largest cardiology groups will spend \$8 million to erect a 58,000-square-foot medical office building near Riverside Methodist Hospital.

MidOhio Cardiology Consultants expects to break ground on the project June 13, said Suzanne Inglis, executive director of the 20-physician group practice. The three-story building at 3705 Olentangy River Road should be completed by summer 2002, she said.

The building will sit north of Riverside Hospital and next to the McConnell Heart Health Center, a cardiac rehabilitation facility affiliated with OhioHealth, Riverside's parent.

MidOhio Cardiology will lease the land from OhioHealth but own the building, Inglis said.

"The building will give us an opportunity to put everything under one roof and increase our ancillary services," Inglis said. "In the last four years, we've added 13 physicians to the practice and our (patient) volumes continue to grow rapidly.

"Frankly, we're just out of space," she said.

The new building will house areas for patient care, diagnostic testing, nuclear imaging, and administrative and staff support. It will include two nuclear cameras, echocardiogram machines, stress testing apparatus and magnetic resonance imaging equipment.

"Everything should be more convenient for our patients," Inglis said. "There will be great parking right outside the building, and it should be a nice relationship to be that close to the McConnell Heart Health Center."

Riverside link

MidOhio Cardiology employs 105 workers, including 20 at its MidWest Cardiology Research Foundation. The foundation is involved in clinical trials of drug and medical devices used on heart patients.

Once construction is completed, MidOhio will move out of the clinical space it leases at 3400 Olentangy River Road as well as leave the business offices it occupies on the Riverside campus. The two areas total about 22,000 square feet.

The cardiology practice will fill about 45,000 square feet in the new building, Inglis said. Available for lease will be a 5,000-square-foot office suite on the top floor, four examination rooms on the first floor and 5,000 square feet of shell space on the lower level.

At some point, MidOhio hopes to establish an outpatient cardiac catheterization laboratory in the building's lower level, Inglis said. For now, however, only hospitals can perform such procedures in Ohio.

"We've asked to be the pilot program for that," she said.

At the same time, MidOhio physicians will continue their close relationship with Riverside where they perform many of their procedures, Inglis said.

MidOhio was founded in 1987 by Drs. Barry George and Robert Candela, pioneers in the angioplasty field.

The practice has grown to where it performs nearly seven of every 10 nonsurgical cardiology procedures at Riverside, said Dr. Mike Hindman, senior operations officer at the hospital. It also maintains a daily inpatient census of more than 100 patients, or roughly a sixth of Riverside's daily total.

"This is a nationally recognized group," he said of MidOhio. "They have helped position Riverside as one of the country's top five to 10 heart programs, not just for volume but cutting-edge technology."

The long-term land lease with MidOhio is the first of its kind for Riverside, he said.

"We see it as a collaborative relationship," Hindman said. "We want to develop relationships that keep physicians largely tied to our campus. It can't be just about real estate or business, but a collaboration with our patients and community in mind."

More about MidOhio

He also sees the MidOhio building tying in nicely with the McConnell Heart Health Center's mission of heart disease prevention and rehabilitation.

"We were asked to create a building that is compatible to the McConnell Center," said John Hardt, project manager for Columbus-based Andrews Architects, which is designing MidOhio's building. "Both parties want the image of a campus with two buildings that are complimentary of each other."

That means the MidOhio building will draw on the type of stone, glass and roofing material seen at the McConnell Center.

"Some see some Frank Lloyd Wright in it," Hardt said. "It's not intended to be a throwback to that, but it's a contemporary update on some of those ideas."

Columbus-based Prime Medical Group Inc. is the general contractor for the project.

MidOhio Cardiology also operates clinics in Cambridge and Kenton and has a long-standing relationship with Blanchard Valley Hospital in Findlay. In July, the practice will open a clinic in Marietta and an office in Portsmouth.

Inglis said the practice focuses on interventional cardiology, including catheterizations, balloon angioplasties and stent placements; electrophysiology, which involves the diagnosis of heart rhythm irregularities; non-invasive cardiology, such as stress tests and echocardiograms; and congestive heart failure.

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