

VCU Health breaks ground on \$90M outpatient cardiac center next to Diamond District



The Pauley Heart Center Pavilion is planned to be a \$90 million project and would feature cardiac medical and research facilities. (Courtesy VCU Health)

Construction of VCU Health's newest cardiac care facility got off to a ceremonious start this week.

The health system held a groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday for its 100,000-square-foot Pauley Heart Center Pavilion planned on the old Pet Dairy property at 1505 Robin Hood Road.

The cardiovascular center is anticipated to cost \$90 million and is slated to open in April 2028, according to Shirley Gibson, VCU Health's vice president of real estate.

VCU Health anticipates it will initially utilize 93,000 square feet of the 2-story center. The remaining square footage is planned to be shell space that would be filled based on future needs, Gibson said.

The facility is being financed through the health system's reserves and donations. The project's general contractor is Kjellstrom+Lee. PSH+ is the architect. Townes is the civil engineer.

VCU Health said that with the addition of the new center, the health system will increase clinical capacity and provide shorter wait times for appointments that require consultation with specialists and complex imaging.

The center is designed to offer treatment, research and education for cardiac health. It would feature more than 18 exam rooms, laboratory and clinical research space, classrooms and a pharmacy.

The center is planned to include a 10,000-square-foot imaging suite with two MRI machines and a CT scanner, which account for nearly \$16 million of the project's anticipated cost. There are also plans for a

cardiac rehab center with what VCU Health says will be the first full-size cardiac rehab walking track in the state.

“It’s a state-of-the-art facility that will expand our access to critical cardiovascular care, ... bring together life-saving research, education and rehabilitation, making it a truly collaborative experience for improved heart health,” VCU Health CEO Marlon Levy said in his remarks. “The need for accessible, complex cardiovascular care in central Virginia has never been greater.”

The new facility’s site, just off the interstate and near a bus line, was selected to make it accessible to patients reluctant to visit VCU Health’s main hub in downtown Richmond, where finding a place to park can be difficult, VCU President Michael Rao said during the event. The new cardiac center is planned to have more than 450 surface parking spaces, according to a VCU Health news release.

“We’ll get an opportunity to be out in the community. We cannot expect everyone to come to us at the medical center for a lot of different reasons, one of which is just parking. People are just put off by parking. And sometimes people are not well and still are put off by parking,” Rao said.

Mayor Danny Avula and others also gave remarks during the event.

The upcoming facility would be part of VCU Health’s Pauley Heart Center, which was founded about 20 years ago. It is headquartered at the VCU Medical Center in downtown Richmond and has outpatient centers in central and southeast Virginia. The center’s services range from heart transplants to cardiovascular disease prevention and cardiac imaging, and it also has a research program.

VCU Health isn’t planning to relocate any existing facilities or operations to fill out the upcoming center near Scott’s Addition and the upcoming Diamond District development anchored by CarMax Park.

The center would be about the same square footage as the former Pet Dairy facility that had occupied the property but has [since been demolished](#). S.B. Cox handled the demolition of the site.

VCU Health bought [most of the 7-acre project site for \\$9.5 million](#) in October 2024. An adjacent, 1-acre site at 1500 Sherwood Ave., which VCU Health bought more than a decade ago, is also part of the project site.