



Construction of \$12 million Center for Family Health facility in downtown Jackson expected to start next month

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Construction of a \$12 million health center in downtown Jackson is set to begin next month.

The new 54,000-square-foot facility, to be located at the former Art Moehn car dealership on N. Jackson Street, will help more low-income people who need primary health-care services, officials say.

"The (community) response has been incredibly supportive," said Jane Robinson, the center's development coordinator. "When they see that we're serving almost 25,000 people each year, they see the impact we have on the community."

The new facility at 505 N. Jackson St. will have three floors and will feature a pharmacy, more than 60 medical examination rooms and an on-site diagnostic center.

The new facility will allow the center to create 75 full-time, competitive-wage positions and provide services to 13,000 more patients in the next five years, Executive Director Molly Kaser has said.

The [Center for Family Health](#) serves one of every four Jackson residents, Robinson said.

"However, in these economic times, demand is always growing," she said. "By relocating our services to the heart of the city, we will increase access to quality health care in a convenient one-stop location."

The Center for Family Health announced in July its purchase of 5 acres of land, which has been vacant for about eight years, to construct its new community health center.

The facility — scheduled to open in June 2011 — will consolidate four of the Center for Family Health's sites to bring medical, dental and administrative services under one roof in downtown Jackson.

About 160 employees work at those locations and will move to the new center. Its current administrative building is at 2298 Springport Road. It also operates a handful of clinics, including a dental clinic at 817 W. High St.

The Center for Family Health will continue to operate its two school-based health centers at Northeast Elementary School and the Middle School at Parkside in addition to the downtown Jackson site.

About \$1 million in federal stimulus funds will be used to cover the administrative portion of the new facility. The remaining \$11 million will be paid for by grants, donations and financing opportunities.

The agency also was awarded about \$363,000 in stimulus funds last year to increase staff and expand health-care services.

"A centralized, downtown facility is critically important to our goal to serve our patient population and meet the growing health care demands of our community," Kaser said in a news release.

The Center for Family Health offers medical care to anyone, but it and other community health centers traditionally serve people with limited access to other forms of health care. The center has a sliding fee scale for patients and does not refuse anyone who cannot pay for services.