



## Family Health Center planning \$9M expansion; will add 56 new jobs on Kalamazoo's Northside

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By Alex Nixon | Kalamazoo Gazette

**KALAMAZOO** — The Family Health Center is planning a \$9.3 million expansion of its facility, which will allow it to double the number of patients it treats each year.

The building expansion also will result in the federally funded healthcare center adding 56 new employees, a 40 percent increase over the 130 doctors, nurses and support staff employed by the organization, said Denise Crawford, president and chief executive of **Family Health Center**.



Scott Harmsen | Kalamazoo Gazette

The Family Health Center in Kalamazoo is planning a \$9.3 million expansion and wants to build a new parking lot on the site of a former Public Safety station on North Rose Street. The Kalamazoo City Commission will vote March 21 on a proposal to sell the property to the center for \$1.

"We've met our capacity," Crawford said of the Family Health Center's 25,000-square-foot main facility, 117 W. Paterson St.

"Currently we're serving about 20,000 individuals ... in Kalamazoo County," she said. "What's important to note is that there are 60,000 patients (in the county) that need our services. We're maxed out and we're not even serving half the need."

The center hopes construction of the 36,000-square-foot expansion can begin before May 1, Crawford said.

Family Health Center is designated a Federally Qualified Health Center and provides ambulatory healthcare services to people without health insurance or who receive federal Medicaid benefits. The organization receives a higher-than-average Medicaid reimbursement from the federal government to treat an underserved population.

Construction costs are being funded by a grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the federal stimulus program passed in 2009. Family Health Center was awarded a \$9.3 million grant in October to fund construction — the largest of three grants made to Federally Qualified Health Centers in Michigan, Crawford said.

"Kalamazoo was identified as one of the top five cities in Michigan that didn't have acceptable health care services for the (underserved) population," she said.

Part of the project includes creating a new parking lot for the center to the south on North Rose Street on the site of a

closed Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety station.

The Kalamazoo City Commission on Monday night heard a first reading of a proposal to sell the property at 1030 N. Rose to the Family Health Center for \$1. Family Health Center would pay to raze the structure.

Commissioners will vote on the proposal during their March 21 meeting.

"It's really going to transform that area of the Northside," Crawford said of the center's expansion, which is expected to be completed by October 2012.

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