

Health Alliance firms up plans for \$200 million hospital

The [Health Alliance](#) is making good on its promise to build a new community hospital at the University Pointe medical campus in West Chester.

The \$200 million, 160-bed hospital would open in the summer of 2008 and would provide 24-hour care including surgical, outpatient and imaging services, and a full-service emergency department, Ken Hanover, Health Alliance CEO, said.

The 370,000-square-foot facility will be near the border of Butler and Warren counties. Plans also call for a future expansion to 300 beds.

To build the hospital, the Health Alliance will purchase 29 acres of the 75-acre [University Pointe campus](#) off Tylersville Road from [UC Physicians](#) and Miller-Valentine, who are developers at the site.

The hospital will sit opposite a 29,000-square-foot, \$12.6 million short-stay surgical hospital already in operation at University Pointe and jointly owned by UC Physicians and the Health Alliance.

Bob Herrick, senior vice president for planning and corporate development at the Health Alliance, said plans call for the new hospital to work in concert with the short-stay surgery center.

"We won't duplicate and compete with ourselves," he said.

In that vein, operating rooms at the community hospital will be for inpatient cases while the short-stay center will continue to handle outpatient procedures and many imaging needs, though the community hospital also is required to have imaging onsite.

An 80,000-square-foot medical office building, a diagnostic imaging center and several retail, restaurant and medical outlets also dot the campus.

"The new hospital will be paperless, high-tech and designed with physicians and patients in mind," Hanover said. "We can design services to meet the shifting needs of our community while using remarkable, state-of-the-art advancements."

Plans for a new hospital-like facility have been in the works since at least 2002, when the Health Alliance and UC Physicians announced their joint ventures at University Pointe. Rapid population growth in the region helped push plans for the full-service hospital forward.

"By the time the hospital opens, the Butler and Warren county populations will have grown more than 10 percent," Hanover said.

This new Health Alliance hospital will enter a crowded medical market.

University Pointe is located within 10 miles of [Mercy Fairfield Hospital](#) and the [Health Alliance's Fort Hamilton Hospital](#). [Middletown Regional Hospital](#) -- which will soon have a new facility and medical campus -- is 15 miles north.

Critics say the medical community must be careful as it adds additional capacity to the market. More medical centers mean the need for more nurses, pharmacists, physicians and other health care workers and

shortages still exist in those labor markets. And several national studies have shown that more medical centers in a community can lead to increased medical usage, which in turn can inflate the overall cost of care.

UC Physicians executives have said they expect the University Pointe campus to be a magnet for patients within 25 miles for routine care and within 100 miles for more serious needs.

The Health Alliance is the parent company for Christ, University, St. Luke, Jewish and Fort Hamilton hospitals.