

New county health center could be seeing patients in San Pablo by 2012

[By Tom Lochner](#)

[Contra Costa Times](#)

Posted: 01/25/2010 03:02:32 PM PST

Updated: 01/25/2010 03:02:32 PM PST

A new county health center for West Contra Costa, riding on a \$12 million award of federal stimulus funds, will open on the campus of Doctors Medical Center San Pablo in early 2012, according to a timeline unveiled Monday.

Ground is supposed to be broken in August on a parking garage, to be followed by the clinic building.

The announcement came at a ceremony in the hospital lobby featuring U.S. Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez; county Supervisor John Gioia; county Health Services Director William Walker; officials of the hospital and its governing boards; and Executive Director Cheryl Johnson of the Brookside Community Health Center, which spun off from the hospital in 1997.

The new health center will put the hospital and its owner, the West Contra Costa Healthcare District, on the road to "sustainability" while benefiting the county and the West County community, several officials predicted.

"This is what we hope the rest of the country gets: More and better health care, close to home," said Doctors CEO Joseph Stewart."

The clinic will replace the county's Richmond Health Center, which officials say is functionally obsolete. That clinic handles about 90,000 patient visits a year, officials said. Brookside, which operates a clinic in Richmond and one in San Pablo, handles about 52,000 patient visits annually, Johnson said. Brookside provides primary care; the county clinic, specialty care as well as primary care. Both will route patients to Doctors Medical Center for inpatient care.

The county will leverage the \$12 million into a financing package that will include bonds to be issued by the county, said Gioia, adding that details of the financing are being worked on. The total cost of the project will be in the range of \$40 million to \$50 million, Walker said.

Walker dubbed the new clinic "the second miracle." The first miracle, he said, was saving the hospital; that happened in 2004, following voter approval of a \$52-a-year parcel tax.

Contact Tom Lochner at 510-262-2760.

###