

New West County Health Center opening soon

By: [Spencer Whitney](#) | August 16, 2012 – 9:23 am

On September 4, West Contra Costa County residents will have a state of the art, two-story, 53,000 square foot West County Health Center. Located in San Pablo, the new health center will be 30 percent larger than the current Richmond Health Center, with new examination rooms with greater capacity for patients and an additional three-level parking structure. The staffers who will work in the new center are in the process of converting from paper medical records to an electronic medical record system. Once it opens, residents will soon have a choice between Doctor's Medical Center, which is also located in San Pablo, and the new health center.

"The staff is thrilled about the move to a new location and the chance to work with new equipment," said Patrick Godley, Chief Operation Officer of Contra Costa Health Services. "Our new location in San Pablo is much more accessible to county residents, especially if they are commuting on the main bus line. The AC Transit 72 bus runs right by the center."

The new health clinic will not be a full hospital, but will provide outpatient care instead of an emergency room or critical care facilities that are currently offered by Doctors Medical Center. It will continue to offer services such as providing prosthetic limbs for amputee victims and rehabilitation treatments, as well as neurosurgery and internal medicine.

"Contra Costa County is unique because we are the first county to have HMO plans that were started in the 1970s, as well as agreements with other hospitals," said John Gioia, District County Supervisor. "The bottom line is with all of the maintenance issues and older equipment, Richmond Health Center needs to be replaced. The majority of patients visiting the hospital are low-to-middle income residents from Richmond and San Pablo and they deserve the best care available."

Construction began for the new center in the spring of 2011. Total construction costs for the center have reached over \$30 million dollars, with the county receiving \$12 million dollars from the Obama administration in March to be used towards the center as part of a healthcare initiative.

In July, the John Muir Health Center located in Walnut Creek announced its donation of \$1 million to the new West County Health Center, enabling expanded evening and weekend care and helping to reduce the demand of the emergency department at nearby Doctors Medical Center, with which they have a partnership. Doctor's Medical Center represents almost 80 percent of the inpatient capacity in West Contra Costa, and has provided nearly 60 percent of West County's emergency care.

Last year, there were over 60,000 patient visits to Richmond Health Center. Doctor's Medical Center was originally set up in the 1940s to provide access to care for low-income and uninsured families, but the center has experienced financial troubles in recent years and filed for bankruptcy in 2006.

"With the new county health center, the staff will be able to provide better and faster care to patients," said Godley of the staff at Richmond Medical Center. "County officials and residents have been talking about replacing Richmond Medical Center for years, and I'm glad that we were able to make it happen."

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