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LOCAL

FSU, TMH break ground on future academic health center, expected to open in late 2026

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Florida State University broke ground on a new academic health center Thursday as it moves one step closer to establishing the state-of-the-art facility, which is slated to open in late 2026.

The Florida Legislature and Gov. Ron DeSantis granted FSU \$125 million two years ago toward building the health center, which will be a five-story building of up to 130,000 square feet with about 350 parking spaces, according to a draft report.

FSU President Richard McCullough said, “It's important for us that we get access to the best problems and the best minds in medical and clinical research. This will attract patients to come here and be treated by some of the best doctors in the world.”

FSU partnered with Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare and held the groundbreaking event on TMH's campus. The complex will be on Surgeons Drive just north of Tallahassee State College's Ghazvini Center for Healthcare Education. This also places the new structure off an often busy Centerville Road.

According to McCullough, this is just the beginning.

The new facility is expected to help FSU and TMH work toward their primary goal of transforming the future of health care across the region during a time where North Florida continues to face a crucial shortage of professionals in the field.

Gadsden County's Ajax Building Company will be the contractor for the project, which will include clinical research space, a family residency practice, a research collaboration center to engage the community, simulation spaces and lab facilities.

The groundbreaking ceremony drew in over 50 people from FSU, TMH, elected officials and the community.

TMH President and CEO Mark O'Bryant said, "This building is a stake in the ground for a series of partnerships that will transform how we deliver care in this community."

More: Traffic, lights, noise: FSU/TMH health center's design plan draws neighborhood concerns

FSU Board of Trustees chair Peter Collins said he simply "can't wait" for the new center to be open. He thanked O'Bryant for his hard work, "He's got a tough job, maybe tougher than the president's, with wrangling a lot of different people. But I appreciate that. I appreciate the work. I appreciate the effort."

Besides the new academic health center, other joint initiatives that FSU and TMH have taken include establishing residency programs for psychiatry, internal medicine and general surgery.

A medical campus is also underway on behalf of FSU and TMH in Panama City Beach, where one of the campus's several buildings was opened in July.

O'Bryant says this partnership will keep Tallahassee's healthcare "locally governed, locally controlled, and in the hands of experts in the field of clinical excellence. This will really drive healthcare to a level that we've never, ever seen in this community."

Since the building has an expected proximity to Betton Hills neighborhood homes – and as a potential road extension is being considered – some who live in the area are worried about heightened traffic as well as light and noise pollution.

However, the university has been gathering input related to the new building and has made some design changes, according to an FSU spokesperson.

Construction for the new academic health center's building will start this month, according to a university spokesperson.

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