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FEATURED

## Ground broken on new medical center in Waldorf

By Paul Lagasse [plagasse@somdnews.com](mailto:plagasse@somdnews.com) 2 hrs ago



Dr. Vinod K. Shah, CEO and managing director of MedStar Shah Medical Group, said that his organization's new \$25 million health care facility on St. Patrick's Drive will help reduce health care costs for patients by consolidating many specialists in a location.

STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL LAGASSE

Charles County Board of Commissioners' President Reuben B. Collins II (D) and Del. Debra Davis (D-Charles) were among the dignitaries who attended a groundbreaking ceremony in Waldorf on Wednesday to mark the official start of construction of a state-of-the-art medical facility that is expected to improve access to medical care and provide high-paying jobs closer to home.

Against a backdrop of construction machinery bustling around the St. Patrick's Drive property, Davis, Collins and Commissioners Gilbert Bowling III (D) and Thomasina Coates (D) joined representatives from the MedStar Shah Medical Group in donning hard hats and wielding golden shovels to break ground on the \$25 million, 51,000-square-foot "integrated primary care facility" that, when completed, is expected to serve up to 1,500 people a day.

The two new buildings, which MedStar Shah expects will open their doors next fall, are being built on the site of the former Southern Maryland Hospital Center, a five-story building constructed 30 years ago at the corner of St. Patrick's Drive and U.S. 301 that was recently torn down.

Dr. Vinod K. Shah, the CEO and managing director of MedStar Shah Medical Group, said that the new health care facility would serve as a "center of excellence" for health care that will provide a wide range of outpatient medical services in a single location to help cut down on travel time for patients.

"We will [offer] continuity of care from cradle to grave, from childhood to all the way to elderly age, and we will be able to take care of them in an outpatient setting," Shah said in his remarks.

Collins said that the county's leadership was "thrilled" that MedStar Shah chose the location to open its new flagship center.

"Every day, our board of commissioners have taken steps to ensure that the quality of life is unmatched for everyone who lives, works or visits Charles County," Collins said. "MedStar Shah Medical Group's new \$25 million facility will expand access to health care services for the thousands of residents who call Charles County home, directly improving our quality of life."

The new facility is expected to provide up to 80 jobs for health care professionals.

"This is important to us because we know that many of our highly skilled workers commute out of the county every single day to go to other communities," Collins said. "We hope that this will expand options for our residents to work closer to home."

Collins added that he hoped the College of Southern Maryland's new health sciences center — for which the county commissioners had helped break ground just the day before — would serve as a "direct pipeline" to fill those jobs.

County economic development director Darréll Brown told the Maryland Independent that MedStar Shah approached the county with the idea for building an integrated outpatient care center about three years ago, and the county "immediately jumped on that" because health services is one of industries that the economic development department has been targeting as part of its strategic plan.

Brown said that the 80 new professional jobs that will be created represent "a significant start" to the county's effort to bring more medical jobs to the county.



"We want to build the health care industry in Charles County, and this state-of-the-art facility, quite frankly, will be a landmark" offering "almost one-stop health care shopping."

"We're very proud of what Dr. Shah is doing, and we're very proud that he selected Charles County to do it," Brown said.

By consolidating MedStar Shah's three Charles County locations into a single facility, Shah told the Maryland Independent, physicians will be able to "aggressively manage [patients] in an outpatient setting and keep them out of the hospital," helping to reduce health care costs.

Furthermore, Shah said, "this kind of a facility allows physicians to work as a team so that we can work in a more efficient way."

Shah and two other physicians established what since became MedStar Shah Medical Group 45 years ago in Leonardtown. Today the practice is the largest in MedStar Health's Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, with over 100 physicians and specialists throughout Southern Maryland performing over 200,000 medical procedures daily.

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