

Kaiser Permanente to establish medical center in Waldorf

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Charles County government announced Tuesday that Kaiser Permanente will develop a medical center on a 23-acre site on Crain Highway in Waldorf.

The health system has the first phase on track to open at the beginning of 2025 and will cost about \$100 million. The approximately 100,000-square-foot facility is part of Kaiser Permanente's strategy to improve geographic access to care for over 770,000 members, expand capacity for specialty services and support membership growth in the county.

Over 14,000 Kaiser Permanente members are currently in the county with membership projected to increase by 50% over the next eight years. Ruth Williams-Brinkley, region president of Kaiser Permanente, said the group looks forward to bringing award-winning doctors and the innovative care system to the county.

“This acquisition is part of our aggressive expansion plan that aims to provide current and future members with conveniently located high-quality care,” Williams-Brinkley said.

The medical center will be located near the intersection of Crain Highway and Billingsley Road, visible to commuters in the county and Washington, D.C. It is currently planned to be placed between a planned light rail system and future residential and retail development.

“Our world-class physicians provide a full continuum of medical care to produce the best outcomes for their patients,” said Dr. Richard McCarthy, medical director for Kaiser Permanente in the mid-Atlantic region. “I’m excited to bring their extensive experience and innovative-spirit to the residents of Charles County.”

The medical center will offer 24/7 advanced urgent care, primary and speciality care, supported by a full complement of ancillary departments including pharmacy, clinical lab and diagnostic imaging. Approximately 300 staff members will be employed at the center, including a number of new jobs to the community.

“Health care is one of our targeted industries for economic growth and workforce development,” Darr éll Brown, the county's director of the economic development, said. “The availability of highly-skilled healthcare professionals will support Kaiser

Permanente's new operation and we have a pipeline for talent to sustain it in the long term."

Commissioner Gilbert "BJ" Bowling III (D) said the medical center will serve as a wonderful asset to the community. Bowling said Kaiser Permanente has a positive history of bringing jobs and health care security to residents and he believes the center will bring those to the county.

"We are just elated about it," Bowling said. "It says a lot about the county that they are willing to make such a large investment. We are coming through on some milestones and it will provide services to our residents that they need."

Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins II (D) said the center will be a result of various parts of Charles government being of assistance to Kaiser Permanente, including the economic development and planning and growth management departments. Collins said the project will act as continuation of the county's strategic plan for development, after highlighting health care services as ways to build the local economy.

"This doesn't happen in a vacuum," Collins said. "Any kind of major development like this takes time."

Collins said the location of the new facility and alignment with the future rapid transit and residential development is exactly what the county needs.

"To have a large corporate entity coming into our community feeling confident their brand will continue to shine, I think that shows where we are as a community and how others view the potential of Charles County," Collins said.