

Children's Hospital Boston is coming to Centennial Business Park

By Matthew K. Roy, Staff writer
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PEABODY — Children's Hospital Boston recently spent \$46.5 million on space in Centennial Business Park and yesterday announced plans for a new facility that will replace and expand on the hospital's existing operation at Lahey North Clinic in Peabody.

The hospital hopes to open a 120,000-square-foot outpatient care center by 2011. The lease for its Lahey location expires in March of that year.

"We're very excited about this opportunity to expand our services to Peabody and the surrounding communities," said Michelle Davis, a hospital spokesperson.

Children's Hospital has had a presence at Lahey for 10 years. It occupies 6,500 square feet there. Eleven staff members handle 15,000 patient visits a year, Davis said. The new facility will provide room for additional pediatric specialists to satisfy a growing demand for service on the North Shore, according to Davis. "We know the demand is there," she said.

The hospital also wants the facility to help decrease the number of patient trips to Boston so space there can be freed up to care for acutely ill children and those needing intensive-care services. "We're trying to get as much activity off of our Boston campus as we can," Davis said.

Ten Centennial Drive is situated off Route 128 close to the intersection of 95 north. The hospital bought 80,000 square feet of vacant space. It will renovate the existing structure and likely build an addition, Davis said. She would not confirm the purchase price. But a deed filed in the Southern Essex Registry of Deeds on Oct. 30 shows that Children's Extended Care Center Inc., a nonprofit corporation affiliated with the hospital, bought the property in the business park from Intercontinental Fund III LLC for \$46.5 million.

The facility is still in the planning stages, but Davis said it will provide care in a wide range of specialties: cardiology; orthopedics; sports medicine; physical therapy; ear, nose and throat; and urology among them. It will possibly include operating rooms for day surgeries.

"Patients will receive the same high-quality care from children's clinicians that they receive in Boston but in a location more convenient to their homes," James Mandell, M.D., chief executive of Children's Hospital Boston, said in a statement.

Given the struggling economy, city officials are excited about the hospital's investment and the new construction, health care and support services jobs it will likely create.

"The city of Peabody is thrilled to have Children's Hospital join the emerging medical mecca that Centennial Business Park is becoming," Mayor Michael Bonfanti said in a statement. "This is great news for our city in terms of jobs, economic development and the spin-off that some 300 new jobs and a state-of-the-art medical center will generate throughout the community."

In addition to their work in Peabody, doctors from Children's Hospital also provide services at Beverly Hospital.