

\$838 million Neurosciences Center planned for Yale's St. Raphael campus in New Haven

By **Ed Stannard** Updated 7:02 pm EDT, Monday, April 29, 2019



IMAGE 1 OF 20

Yale New Haven Health and Yale New Haven Hospital at a news conference April 29, 2019.

NEW HAVEN — An \$838 million Neurosciences Center at **Yale New Haven Hospital's** St. Raphael campus will make the hospital a leading center for the research and care of Parkinson's disease, stroke and other brain-related disorders, officials of Yale New Haven Health, the city and Gov. Ned Lamont announced Monday.

The 505,000-square-foot center will bring in \$11.9 million to the city: \$8.9 million in prepaid building fees next fiscal year and \$3 million this year as a one-time payment to help reduce health care costs for city employees. Officials said the city and health care system are working to reduce those costs for city workers in the future.

In addition to focusing on neuroscience research and

In addition to focusing on neuroscience research and treatment of neurological diseases, the project will move 204 patient beds out of shared rooms in the East Pavilion, which was the section of the Hospital of St. Raphael built in 1953.

"We are working to provide a patient experience that meets or exceeds our patients' expectations," said Marna Borgstrom, CEO of Yale New Haven Health and the hospital. "Being sick and being in a room with roommates no longer delights our patients, as you can imagine."

She said the center would provide care for conditions from "stroke to movement disorders like Parkinson's disease to complex brain abnormalities." The center will "bring the most challenging neurological diseases to the forefront ...marshaling the exceptional science of our colleagues at the Yale School of Medicine."

Borgstrom, Lamont, Mayor Toni Harp and Board of Alders President Tyisha Walker-Myers all said the hospital had worked closely with the West River neighborhood in planning the project. Borgstrom said Yale New Haven worked "in partnership with our community and in lockstep with our elected and community leaders."

Details still are being worked out and the number of jobs that will be created is unknown, though Robert Hutchinson, a spokesman for Yale New Haven Health, said "we're pretty confident it will be well into the hundreds," including both construction and permanent jobs.

"This investment right here reminds me of why New Haven, Connecticut, is the central hub of what we can do in the state of Connecticut," Lamont said. He praised "what this means in terms of ALS [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis] and Parkinson's and brain tumors and other diseases that so ravage" patients and their families.

Once the new center opens, the entrance to the St. Raphael campus will move from Chapel Street to George Street. Harp said the project "slowly came together over the last couple of

years." It will be built within the block St. Raphael occupies, near the corner of George Street and Sherman Avenue.

"There's no understating its significance for Yale New Haven Health, for the city of New Haven and for the state of Connecticut." She added that it will increase the need to improve the state's transportation system, including faster rail trips to and from New York City and an upgrade to Tweed New Haven Regional Airport.

She added, "It's not lost on me that three women in leadership positions got this project finished": herself, Borgstrom and Walker-Myers.

Walker-Myers, in whose 23rd Ward the St. Raphael campus is located, said it was important that community leaders were involved in planning, especially concerning traffic and access.

The parking garage on Orchard Street will be expanded and renovated and a 200-car garage will be built under the new center, which consists of two side-by-side buildings.

"On behalf of the West River Neighborhood Association and the West River community, we really thank you," she said to hospital leadership, because investment in the hospital translates to investment in the neighborhood.

Mary Farrell, chairwoman of Yale New Haven Hospital's board of trustees, said, "We are proud of delivering on the commitments we made seven years ago," when **Yale New Haven bought St. Raphael**, a Roman Catholic hospital burdened by debt and pension liabilities. At the time, Christopher O'Connor, then the CEO of St. Raphael, warned that the hospital, founded in 1907 by the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth, **was on the brink of bankruptcy**. O'Connor now is chief operating officer of Yale New Haven Health.

Richard D'Aquila, president of Yale New Haven Health, said the hospital is a leader in stroke prevention and care as well as movement and other neurodegenerative disorders. It was the first to perform mechanical thrombectomies, which remove clots that could lead to stroke, and the St. Raphael campus is certified as an advanced stroke center, which uses video conferencing to diagnose and help develop care for patients at other hospitals.

"This campus will be really exceptional, from early diagnosis to treatment" of neurological disorder and "restorative care," D'Aquila said. The new center will "allow us to push the frontier of neurological care well beyond where we are today," he said.

Dr. Robert Alpern, dean of the **Yale School of Medicine**, said "many medical schools have specialties in different areas, but Yale really specializes in neuroscience" and is No. 1 in the

country in receiving research grants in that area from the National Institutes of Health. **The Kavli Institute** at the medical school researches the study of neural cells and systems and Alpern said the school is one of eight national Alzheimer's disease centers and a member of the **Northeast ALS Consortium**.

He said Yale researchers have worked to reduce stroke risk by decreasing inflammation, developed ketamine as a drug to treat depression "in collaboration with Mount Sinai" and "identified a channel that mediates pain. This is going to be a critical approach in the avoidance of opioids."

edward.stannard@hearstmediact.com; 203-680-9382

© 2019 Hearst Communications, Inc.

H E A R S T