

## Tenet Reveals Plans For 200-Bed Hospital in Palm Beach County

10/16/2011

*The Palm Beach Post*

By Stacey Singer, The Palm Beach Post, Fla.

Oct. 16--PALM BEACH GARDENS -- Tenet Healthcare has lifted the veil on its plans for a \$120 million, 80-bed teaching hospital within the biotech corridor along Donald Ross Road, saying its proposal is the first phase of an ambitious plan to create a top academic medical center.

In a 209-page document Tenet filed with the state's Agency for Health Care Administration last week, Tenet proposes a teaching hospital built in three phases, eventually reaching a substantial 200 beds. The design calls for 74 rooms set aside for scientific and classroom work in phase one, and unusually large patient and operating suites able to accommodate clusters of medical students.

Dr. Michael Friedland, dean of Florida Atlantic University's new medical school, said those elements and a local governing board of leading minds from Scripps Florida, Max Planck and the medical school at FAU will attract physicians who are leaders in their fields.

"These physicians will have to be committed to being engaged in teaching and research, not just patient care," Friedland said. "There is going to be teaching going on constantly."

There is, however, opposition.

Jupiter Medical Center Chief Executive Officer John Couris said Scripps could have everything it needs by partnering with his hospital.

"We really work hard at being world-class," Couris said. "What is this really about? It's about market grab, duplicating services unnecessarily and it's about a land deal for Scripps, because they are going to get money."

It was 2004 when Scripps signed a deal with Palm Beach County to expand here. At the time, then-Gov. Jeb Bush urged local officials to think big.

After all, the state was putting \$310 million into recruitment of the bioscience powerhouse, hoping to diversify from a low-wage, tourism-dependent economy to a high-tech future.

"Plan for nothing less than massive success," Bush urged.

The land set aside was a vast 2,000-acre former orange grove that was more than 10 miles from the nearest hospital.

Real estate and environmental battles ended with Scripps moving east to Jupiter's Abacoa. The ramifications of that decision are becoming clear as Tenet's new hospital proposal now goes before regulators in Tallahassee.

Through a permitting process known as a Certificate of Need, Tenet must prove to the state that there is a need for a new Palm Beach Gardens hospital, and that the new facility won't damage existing medical programs.

That could prove challenging in the population-dense area of Jupiter and Palm Beach Gardens.

The proposed Florida Regional Hospital -- Tenet's working name for the project -- would be slightly more than 3 miles from Jupiter Medical Center, a nonprofit hospital, and less than 5 miles from Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center, another Tenet hospital.

It would be four stories, 280,000 square feet, on about 30 acres along Donald Ross Road and Interstate 95. It would feature 64 inpatient beds for adults, 16 intensive care beds, as well as a 13-bed emergency room. There would be no maternity ward or children's wing. It would have a cardiac catheterization lab and a radiation oncology treatment area.

Tenet would build on land sub-leased from Palm Beach County on the Briger tract, land that Scripps controls and will eventually own. Tenet would pay rent to Scripps at fair-market prices, likely to be millions of dollars a year that would go to support Scripps' science and overhead.

Meanwhile, Jupiter Medical Center plans to file a letter of opposition by the state's Nov. 3 deadline, a step that would give the hospital standing to appeal if the state grants Tenet its Certificate of Need on Dec. 9. Other hospitals, including Martin Memorial Medical Center, are considering opposing Tenet's proposal.

The entire legal process could push back certainty on the project until early 2013, some lawyers said. Tenet believes construction would start about a year after final state approval is granted.

Community leaders are urging the hospital companies and Scripps to find a solution that would benefit all parties. County Commissioner Karen Marcus called a meeting on Sept. 28 to try to get them talking, but it failed.

Tenet's Cowling said Tenet wasn't willing to withdraw its Certificate of Need application and spend six months talking about how to collaborate, which is what Couris had suggested.

Scripps' vice president for scientific operation, Harry Orf, said he's hopeful the state will grant Tenet's application.

The National Institutes of Health is redirecting grant money toward so-called translational research, discoveries intended to go quickly from lab to bedside. Having an academic medical center next door will help Scripps do that, he said.

"It's important for our faculty to be able to interact as directly as possible with clinicians," Orf said. "It really expands the grant-worthiness of our faculty."

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