

The Register-Guard
January 17, 2006

Women's Care clinic explores possible move to RiverBend

By Jack Moran
The Register-Guard

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SPRINGFIELD - A full-service women's health care facility is exploring a possible move from Eugene to PeaceHealth's RiverBend campus in the Gateway area.

Representatives for Women's Care Associates will later this week discuss project details with Springfield city officials, before deciding whether to move forward with a formal development application for construction of a medical office building at Game Farm Road and Mallard Avenue. Preliminary plans submitted last month to the city indicate the office would be a single-story, 12,910- square-foot building.

Karen Rutan, administrator of Eugene-based Women's Care, said her organization may try to buy from PeaceHealth a 2.27-acre lot for an office and a 57-space parking lot. In its preliminary filings, the clinic says it would eventually expand the building to 21,730 square feet, with 72 total parking spaces.

The Women's Care physicians currently work at 598 E. 13th Ave., near Sacred Heart Medical Center.

But Rutan said the clinic's RiverBend idea is far from a done deal, because the organization is also looking into other possible sites in the Eugene-Springfield area that she declined to reveal. Women's Care occupies the East 13th building on a lease agreement, and is seeking to purchase its own space.

"We're trying to find a location that we can own, and we're exploring lots of options," Rutan said.

Another reason Women's Care would like to move from the East 13th spot is because "it really is an older building," Rutan said. "It has nothing to do with the location," she added.

Women's Care has 18 physicians practicing at three Eugene sites. Six of them work at the East 13th building. The remainder are divided between offices at Country Club Road, and in the Physicians & Surgeons buildings next to Sacred Heart.

The clinic's doctors at the Physicians & Surgeons buildings at 1200 Hilyard St. are involved in a separate real estate project at RiverBend that was announced in November. In that project, nine practices known collectively as Northwest Specialty Clinics are

planning to build a new office building next to PeaceHealth's RiverBend hospital.

Tenants would include more than 50 doctors from Women's Care, Northwest Surgical Specialists, Eugene Gastroenterology Consultants, Nephrology Associates, Neurology Associates, Northwest Gynecologic Oncology, the Center for Genetics and Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Oregon Lung Specialists and Oregon Neurosurgery Specialists. Six of those practices currently have offices in the Physicians & Surgeons buildings, which are owned by PeaceHealth.

Northwest Specialty has agreed to lease ground from PeaceHealth at RiverBend, making its doctors the first to make firm plans to move their practices onto the hospital's property. The group hopes to break ground on its new facility by October.

PeaceHealth owns about 170 acres at RiverBend. The campus's master plan calls for construction of several medical office buildings on the property.

PeaceHealth began building its \$350 million regional medical center there last year, with completion scheduled for late 2008.

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