



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2022

CONTACT

Lara Sisselman

lara@cstrategies.com

VNA Health Care Breaks Ground on Joliet Health Center

New 14,000 square foot facility will significantly expand VNA's services for the Joliet community

Joliet, IL - Today, VNA Health Care, the largest community health center in the Chicago suburbs, broke ground on its new health center in Joliet. The new facility, being built on land already owned by VNA at 1501 West Jefferson Street, will include 26 medical exam rooms, a wellness kitchen, waiting areas, laboratory, nursing stations and mental and behavioral health counseling rooms. At the new, expanded 14,000 square foot facility, VNA physicians and nurse practitioners will offer family practice, obstetrics, pediatrics, and mental and behavioral health. This extra capacity will allow VNA to greatly expand their services for the Joliet and surrounding communities, and they expect to serve 5,000 more patients and complete 25,000 more exams over the next 30 months.

At a groundbreaking ceremony today, VNA President and CEO Linnea Windel was joined by Joliet Mayor Bob O'Dekirk, State Representative Larry Walsh (IL-86), Will County board members, representatives from Senator Dick Durbin and Congresswoman Lauren Underwood's office, and others to mark the occasion and recognize the impact this new health center will bring for the community.

"Today is an exciting day for VNA Health Care as we break ground on this new health center, which will allow us to better serve the Joliet community by providing even more residents with access to high-quality, affordable healthcare," said Linnea Windel, President and CEO of VNA Health Care. "Community health centers play a vital role in our healthcare system, and we look forward to expanding our services and increasing our capacity for those in need through this new health center."

Last fall, the Health Resources & Services Administration - Bureau of Public Health (HRSA) awarded VNA \$1.3 million in federal funding to support construction of the new location. The funding was authorized by the American Rescue Plan of 2021, which provided HRSA with funding to support construction, expansion, alteration, renovation, and other capital improvements to modify, enhance, and expand health care infrastructure.

"VNA has had a presence in Joliet for several years and we are very happy they are expanding their footprint in our city. Thank you for the investment and services you are bringing to Joliet," said Joliet Mayor Bob O'Dekirk.

Joliet and the surrounding communities that will be served by the new VNA location have a low-income population of 71,000, but only 26,000 are currently served by Community Health Centers. In Will County, approximately 8% of residents live below the poverty line.

“The services that VNA Health Care provides are absolutely critical to ensuring the health and wellbeing of residents in Joliet and throughout the Chicago suburbs,” said Congressman Bill Foster (IL-11). “I am thrilled that VNA Health Care is receiving federal funding to build this new health center, and I am especially glad that they are taking extra steps to increase language accessibility to better serve the community. As a member of Congress, I will continue to fight for additional funding to support and expand our community health centers.”

To address the 31.5% of the Hispanic/Latino population in Will County that speaks English less than “very well,” VNA’s new Joliet location will offer all services in both English and Spanish with additional languages available through translation services.

“As a registered nurse, I’ve seen firsthand how important increasing access to high-quality, affordable healthcare is for our residents and the role community health centers play in this work,” said Congresswoman Lauren Underwood. “VNA Health Care’s new health center in Joliet will help bring much-needed expanded services to the community, and I’m working in Congress to ensure we secure federal funding to help support its construction.”

The new health center will also provide services to improve overall health outcomes for the community, including chronic disease management, access to cancer screenings like mammograms, benefits assistance, and nutrition education. VNA’s current Joliet location is in a leased space and all services will eventually move to the new location upon project completion. The facility is planned to open for services in 2023.

###

About VNA Health Care

VNA Health Care is the largest community health center in the Chicago suburbs, serving more than 75,000 patients each year across 16 clinics. At the core of VNA’s mission is a commitment to improving health equity and decreasing disparities in healthcare. VNA has served a diverse population regardless of insurance status for more than 100 years and this year marks its 20th Anniversary as a Federally Qualified Health Center. To learn more, visit www.vnahealth.com.