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HealthSouth to build \$24.3M rehab hospital



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HealthSouth Corp. is moving forward with plans to build a \$24.3 million, 50-bed rehabilitation hospital in Altamonte Springs.

"There are a number of medical rehab providers in the area, but the need is greater than what those providers currently can serve," said [Casey Lassiter](#), HealthSouth (NYSE:HLS) spokeswoman.

For example, **Central Florida Regional Hospital** in Sanford has 13 rehab beds.

HealthSouth bought 8.5 acres on April 5 from Orlando broker and developer Billy Bishop. The price of the transaction hasn't been recorded yet with the Orange County Property Appraiser. The land — which already has parking and lighting infrastructure in place — last traded hands in 2006 for \$3.9 million.

HealthSouth plans to start construction in fourth-quarter 2013, finishing in late 2014. HealthSouth hasn't selected a contractor yet for the project.

The planned 54,932-square-foot facility will employ 140 people earning an average of \$55,000 a year, eventually putting \$7.7 million into the economy with salaries.

The jobs would include a medical director, administration, nurses, dietitians, social services, housekeeping, maintenance and ancillary services.

Eventual plans call for adding another 30 rehab beds, bringing the total to 80, and another 17,000 square feet of space, for a total of 72,000 square feet, said [Frank Martz](#), Altamonte Springs city manager.

The rehab hospital will be built near **Adventist Health System's** headquarters and **Seminole State College of Florida's** Altamonte Springs campus, which could help spur nearby development.

"HealthSouth is a further indication that Altamonte has positioned itself well for health, education and medical centers, which bring excellent jobs to our community," said Martz.

HealthSouth initially asked the **Florida Agency for Health Care Administration** permission to build the hospital in 2011, a decision that was denied in December 2011. But by May 2012, HealthSouth and the state had settled the administrative appeal of that decision, which cleared the way for the hospital.

According to the original documents filed in 2011, HealthSouth anticipated reaching 12,601 patient days in the facility's second year, as well as \$29.1 million in revenue and an annual profit of \$1.6 million.

According to the same application, the hospital would have the following specialty programs: stroke rehabilitation, neurological rehabilitation program, arthritis program, wound care program, spinal cord injury program, orthopedic rehabilitation program, hand rehabilitation treatment, fibromyalgia rehabilitation program and chronic pain management.

[Jay Davis](#), spokesman for Seminole State College, said the school already has a "strong partnership" with HealthSouth via an affiliation agreement with its physical therapist assistant program.

The new facility, Davis said, will be "great addition" to the area, which is across the street from where Seminole State is planning a 1.4 million-square-foot campus expansion. "The proposed hospital would provide our nursing and health care students the opportunity to learn how to care for rehab patients, and also provide a nearby location to employ our graduates."

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