

# Saint Anthony plans ER in Chesterton

BY MARK TAYLOR  
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Chesterton-area residents won't have to travel as far for life-saving emergency medical procedures and treatments once the proposed Saint Anthony Memorial Healthcare Centers' freestanding emergency department opens in 2011.

The \$20 million, two-story Saint Anthony Memorial Chesterton Health Center is slated for an autumn groundbreaking.

Saint Anthony Memorial is based in Michigan City and part of the not-for-profit Sisters of St. Francis Health Services system, which operates four other hospitals in Lake County.

Saint Anthony Memorial President Dr. James Callaghan said the system has served the Chesterton community for many years through its Duneland Health and Wellness Institute, which includes a 3,000-member health club and physician offices.

"Physicians will have a place where they can send their patients around the clock and on weekends," Callaghan said.

"It will be a full-service emergency department offering an imaging center, labs and physi-



This artist's conception shows a new emergency treatment center being planned for Chesterton by the Saint Anthony Medical Healthcare Centers. — PHOTO PROVIDED

cian offices on the second floor."

He said the Chesterton facility will be the first freestanding ER for the St. Francis system and the first built in Northwest Indiana.

The development of freestanding emergency departments has been a recent national trend. Proponents of freestanding emergency departments tout shorter waits, better customer service and faster patient turnaround.

Callaghan said nationally the average hospital ER wait is between two and six hours.

"This was designed to produce much faster service than that," he said.

"The Sisters of St. Francis serves all people who come to us, a perspective that not all hospitals and physician groups take. The Chesterton community should know that no one will be turned away by us."

He said the same group of emergency room physicians that operates the ER at Saint Anthony Memorial in Michigan City, the Emergency Physicians Medical Group led by medical director Dr. John Mulligan, will

run the freestanding Chesterton site.

Michigan City builder Tonn & Blank will construct the 45,000-square-foot facility, which Callaghan said will be funded by hospital cash flow and reserves.

The emergency department will include 14 treatment bays with room for expansion and will employ 65 to 70 employees in the ER, lab, imaging center and physician offices.

C. Bernard Doyle, Chesterton's town manager, said the facility, located east of Indiana 49 off of Indian Boundary Road, will satisfy a community need for a close and conveniently located emergency services provider.

"You can never have enough emergency services, especially in a disaster," Doyle said. "We view this as an economic development tool. The construction jobs will help our community and many hired here permanently will move to Chesterton."

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"Today, our residents must travel to other communities for emergency care and when they get there they may face excessive wait times. Bringing additional physicians to Chesterton will improve access to health care, reducing the need for residents to travel outside of town for this essential life/safety service."

- Chesterton Town Manager C. Bernard Doyle

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- **EXPEDITED SERVICES** -- laboratory and imaging.
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