

# Because Everything Matters

by Sean O'Keefe

UCHealth wants to help people live extraordinary lives. Today, they are meeting that mission through an invigorated commitment to learning, healing, and discovery in their people and by improving the parameters of personal connections between patients and providers in their facilities. One of

***“A commitment to care, convenience, and personal connections define the future of healthcare”***

the best examples of embracing these objectives is coming in the form of a sleek, new medical office building currently under construction in Denver's Cherry Creek neighborhood. Located at the intersection of 1st and Cook, the five-story glass jewel box will present a clean professional image of healthcare in a sharp modern building designed to elevate its surroundings. “Presently, we have a significant percentage of patients driving out to University of Colorado Hospital in Aurora, from all over metro-Denver,” says Robin Levy, Business Executive for UCHealth. “This centralized location will be a lot more convenient option for many.”

Perhaps more importantly, when it opens in the spring of 2020 it's likely to totally change many people's perception of healthcare. The 89,000-SF facility will be home to a combination of specialty-care providers, University of Colorado School of Medicine faculty, a full-

service ambulatory surgery center with state-of-the-art imaging facilities, and a comprehensive oncology center. Despite housing almost everything short of a bed to spend the night in, the UCHealth Cherry Creek Medical Center is intended to feel more welcoming than imposing, more a part of the community than not. The building's design comes as part of a global trend in the changing landscape of healthcare architecture where an investment in progress comes at a calculated cost that makes sense on a ledger that considers more than economics. “Healthcare providers are looking to break away from the campus model,” says Robert Jacobs, Principal, and Founder of Brookhaven Capital Partners, the development team behind the project. “Ease of access, an enhanced experience, and increased choices are all fundamental expectations consumers have of basically everything these days, healthcare included. As an investment strategy, our expectation is to deliver all of that in a lower-cost, more convenient environment that is home to world-class care.”

After acquiring the parcel and determining the investment direction Jacobs initiated the design conversation around the future medical office building with Davis Partnership Architects. Jacobs and the team at Davis Partnership, a local firm with strong healthcare experience, worked on developing a design specifically aligned with leading-edge thinking in progressive healthcare.







"The reality of tomorrow's healthcare is full service in a condensed footprint. That means accommodating a lot more than just a few doctor's offices," says Jacobs. Creating a tech-ready medical office building concept with nearly limitless programming possibilities helped Brookhaven attract UCHealth as a long-term tenant. By getting in early, UCHealth was able to join the project while the building was still in design, greatly enhancing Davis Partnership's ability to respond to specific wants and needs. The program being erected today includes full-service ambulatory surgery suites, a free-standing imaging center featuring CT scan and magnetic resonance imaging, and an oncology center with on-site radiation therapy.

Accounting for the interests of top-flight healthcare providers, the Brookhaven team

understands the importance of extending benefits to both patients and the surrounding communities. One of the biggest investments at the UCHealth Cherry Creek Medical Center is likely to go largely unnoticed by the public, an expectation which is just fine with Jacobs.

***"We dug the parking on this site five-levels below the street," says Jacobs. "That's going down as many stories as we are going up!"***

The below-grade effort involved excavating a full twenty feet below the water table on a congested urban site in a mixed-use residential neighborhood. This not only necessitated a lot of intense structural engineering in the design phase but complicated construction

logistics exponentially right from groundbreaking. Chad Holajter is the Senior project manager leading the work for construction manager / general contractor Swinerton. "Excavation to 55-feet below grade is no easy task," says Holajter of the excavation.

"Our on-site dewatering system pumped, cleaned to drinking-water standards, and discharged more than 100 million gallons of water from the site into the storm sewer in a ten-month period."

Brookhaven's return on investment in the excavation effort will be a 221-stall garage for patients, providers, and visitors. The completed property will boast one of the highest parking-to-square foot ratios of any office building in the District. Keeping vehicle traffic flows away from neighboring retail and residential





interests will be achieved by placing the garage entrance and exit on Cook Street just north of 1st Avenue and also exiting vehicles through the alley back to 1st.

Accounting for parking wasn't the only challenge posed on the project. The building's oncology center will include a linear accelerator, a large device used to destroy cancer cells by bombarding a tumor with high radio-frequency electromagnetic rays. As heavy as it is complicated, the equipment and the associated protective vault typically weigh approximately two million pounds. It's so heavy that placement must be accounted for in the building's structural engineering. Fortunately, an equipment vendor that segments the encasement components into high-density blocks was identified. Bringing the vault into the building in pieces rather than using cast-in-place concrete, shaved approximately

six weeks off the construction schedule. "The owner's equipment drives every decision," says Holajter. "Through teamwork, the client, architect, and contractor continually engage to understand the project's complexities related to structural and electrical loading, gases, ventilation and other fine grain details that affect constructability, placement, and costs."

***"Transitioning patients from a conditioned fear of healthcare is a benefit of progressive design."***

With UHealth invested as a long-term tenant, its input in design helped refine material choices, finishes, and aesthetic elements. Fundamentally, progressive thinking in healthcare and the architecture that supports it strive to break away from the institutionally oppressive

ambiance of last century's hospitals and moves toward a feeling that's a little closer to home for patients and visitors.

"We are incorporating a variety of furnishings in warm carpeted areas, soothing tones, and natural light to reduce the intensity and stress often associated with healthcare," says Levy. UHealth's expectation is that the new

Cherry Creek Medical Center will enhance the patient's experience and healthcare results in an innovative environment.

"All of the choices made on this project have been carefully considered, from the façade to the fixtures," finishes Levy. "And that's because, in this line of work, everything matters."

