

Aurora BayCare gets physical with new center

80,000-square-foot, \$13.6 million project ready for its debut

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There is a lot of stationary equipment in the new Aurora BayCare Orthopedics & Sports Medicine Center, but it is expected to be a place of constant activity.

The center is designed for five uses:

- Sports medicine, fitness training and rehabilitation
- An orthopedic clinic
- A pediatric care center
- A conference center
- An orthopedic and outpatient MRI center

The newly opened state-of-the-art facility in the I-43 Business Center will host an open house from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday.

The 80,000-square-foot, \$13.6 million building is just north of the Aurora BayCare Medical Center, where the orthopedic department was previously located in cramped quarters.

"It's a great facility. We can stretch out," said Jon Henry, medical director of Aurora BayCare sports medicine. "We were very much constrained in the previous operation."

Dr. Paul Summerside, president of the board of managers of Aurora BayCare Medical Center in Green Bay, said the facility will serve other purposes, as well.

"Our biggest goal is we want to have the fittest health-care work force in the state," he said. "The vast majority of this country's health-care problems have to do with our own habits. We have to change those.

"This facility, hopefully, makes the statement to our doctors and our patients that we mean it."

The center also addresses a growing demand for athletic training services that are not covered by health insurance.

The workout, training and rehabilitation wing of the building is full of state-of-the-art features, including a three-dimensional video room, an indoor golf training center, a multi-purpose turf area, a running track and sand pit, a performing arts studio, a hockey treadmill room and an outdoor multipurpose training field. There also is a therapy pool, standard treadmills and a wide variety of weight training equipment.

The workout area includes a flexible floor for plyometric training — essentially rapid-pattern jumping.

The performance art dance studio also has a flexible floor. Summerside said performance art participants greatly outnumber those in sports.

"It's probably the silent sport," he said. "It is a fairly high injury-generating activity. Dancers have a very difficult time laying off."

The workout area includes a basketball half-court with NBA, college and high school dimensions and a full volleyball court.

The outdoor training field is designed to remain playable despite large amounts of moisture, which should make it available as early as March and late into the fall.

"This surface, we figure, will give us a couple extra months of training soccer and lacrosse," he said.

The facility also gives Aurora BayCare its third MRI scanner. Two are in the nearby medical center. Summerside said the new scanner, though not an open model, is large enough for fairly large people and is capable of cardiac scans.

He said putting an MRI in the center made sense because there is a lot of collaboration between the orthopedic, rehab and MRI departments.

Aurora has digital storage of X-rays and scans, providing access to doctors around the clock.

"About 25 percent of emergency room volumes are due to orthopedic cases," he said.

Pediatric services were moved to the new center to make trips to the doctor easier for mothers and children. Summerside said they should be more comfortable moved from the larger hospital/clinic setting.

And, finally, the building includes a satellite video conference center that will allow teleconferences and training sessions from around the world. The largest room seats 250, and there are four smaller rooms as well.

"We are getting into medical education here," Summerside said.

While the center will meet current needs, Summerside said, they've learned through experience to design for expandability.

"The days of having it be one way for 50 years are gone," he said.