

# VA awards contract for Charlotte health center

By Karen Garloch

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The Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded a contract to Childress Klein Properties and a Washington, D.C., partner to design and build a \$150 million medical complex that would be the VA's second location in Charlotte.

Construction is expected to start early next year on the 295,000-square-foot health center on 35 acres at the intersection of Tyvola Road and Cascade Pointe Boulevard, near the Tyvola/Billy Graham Parkway interchange.

The Charlotte Health Care Center is expected to open for patients in the summer of 2016. It will be operated by the W.G. (Bill) Hefner VA Medical Center in Salisbury. A second health center will open in Kernersville about the same time.

The new Charlotte health center has been in the planning stages since 2009 and will help meet the area's growing demand for health services by veterans. More than 140,000 veterans live in the Charlotte metropolitan area, about 60,000 in Mecklenburg County alone, according to Howard Blackwelder, past president of the Charlotte Metro Area Blind Veterans Association.

The Mid-Atlantic region has seen "the highest and most consistent rate of growth" in the number of veterans over the last 10 years, according to Daniel Hoffmann, the VA's Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network director.

"This new facility will enhance access to care for thousands of veterans living in and around Charlotte," Hoffmann said in a news release Wednesday. "The Health Care Center ... will be equipped with the finest diagnostic and treatment capabilities available and will provide primary and mental health care as well as many specialty clinics."

The VA already operates a smaller, 55,000-square-foot outpatient clinic at 8601 University East Drive in east Charlotte. The closest VA hospital is in Salisbury.

The group that won the new contract – Childress Klein-Cambridge Healthcare Solutions – is a collaboration of Children Klein and Cambridge Development Group, a subsidiary of Cambridge Holdings in Washington.

The Childress Klein-Cambridge team will also work with a financial partner, Halle Enterprises of Washington D.C.; a Charlotte-based architecture firm, RPA Design; and the general contractor, J.E. Dunn Construction Co. of Charlotte.

The new group will own the building, and the VA will pay an annual rent of \$11.3 million for the 20-year contract.

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