

AROUND TOWN

## VHC Health sees ‘encouraging’ response to West Springfield primary care office

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The community has kept VHC Health’s [primary care office](#) in West Springfield busy since it [opened](#) last June.

Officially welcomed by Fairfax County leaders with a ribbon-cutting and open house on Jan. 31, the practice at 5803 Rolling Road, Suite 110, started with one physician but added a second in October to meet the demand for services, according to Darryl Ernst, the senior vice president of VHC Health Physicians.

He says the nonprofit health system anticipates adding two more physicians into 2025, bringing the office up to VHC’s typical primary care staffing levels. With each physician usually seeing up to 2,500 patients annually, the West Springfield practice could ultimately care for as many as 10,000 to 12,000 patients.

“The office itself has gotten busy fairly quickly,” Ernst told FFXnow. “That’s been very encouraging for us because I think it reinforces why we’ve been asked to come and provide care in that community.”

Located in a brick office building south of the Kings Park neighborhood, VHC Health’s West Springfield facility provides primary care services to people 18 and older, including physical exams, wellness visits and other preventative care, lab testing and chronic disease management. Same-day urgent appointments and telehealth visits are available.

The practice may expand in the future to also offer cardiology services, but a definite decision on that hasn’t been made yet, Ernst says.

Decisions about what services to offer where are driven by community need and possible gaps in a given neighborhood’s health care network, according to Ernst, who says a lot of patients who get cardiology services at VHC Health’s hospital in Arlington live or work in the West Springfield area.

“We want to be in communities that don’t have many providers in a certain specialty,” he said. “So, we believe cardiology is the need in that community, and so, that’s one of the reasons we would do it, in essence, because there’s not the kind of access that we think it should exist for cardiology services.”

The West Springfield practice was among [several new VHC Health facilities](#) to pop up in Fairfax County over the past couple of years. Rebranding from [Virginia Hospital Center](#), the nonprofit now also has facilities in Annandale, Tysons, McLean, Vienna and Kingstowne.

A [digestive health center](#) that focuses exclusively on gastrointestinal issues also opened this past Tuesday (Feb. 13) at 3025 Hamaker Court in Merrifield.

Ernst says VHC Health has been “very intentional” with its expansion into Fairfax County, which was in the works before the COVID-19 pandemic but got temporarily slowed down as medical providers pivoted to virtual services.

In addition to seeking to give its existing patients a more convenient option, the nonprofit has gotten a “tremendous amount” of outreach from elected officials and business leaders requesting facilities in different parts of the county, including West Springfield, according to Ernst.

Though VHC’s offices have been concentrated in the eastern part of the county so far, it’s developing plans to expand to the western side. Ernst says they’re not at a stage yet where he can disclose specific details, but the focus will likely be around Fairfax City and its surrounding areas.

“We think [our facilities are] special, and we just really want them to be a resource for the community and for the residents,” Ernst said.