

# VHC Health to replace aging shopping center with combined ER, urgent care



By [Michael Neibauer](#) – Managing Editor, Washington Business Journal  
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VHC Health has filed plans to demolish and replace a Falls Church retail strip with a single building combining an emergency room, urgent care and primary care offices, in part to ease pressure on existing emergency services at Virginia Hospital Center.

The Arlington-based health care provider acquired Graham Center at Graham Road and Arlington Boulevard in September, according to public records. VHC Health paid \$12 million for the 71-year-old center, anchored by the shuttered Harvest Moon restaurant and Skyline Nail Supply, confirmed Adrian Stanton, VHC's vice president of real estate.

This week, VHC filed an application for a special exception with Fairfax County to construct a 24,250-square-foot medical office in place of Graham Center, which will “offer convenient and timely access for emergency patients, many of the Applicant’s scheduled outpatients, and the general public.” The combined ER and urgent care, expected to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, will consume 14,000 square feet and the remainder will support “other medical services, such as primary care, speciality services, and/or diagnostic imaging services,” according to the application, filed by Kathryn Taylor of Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley & Walsh PC.

Graham Center is located about four miles from the main Virginia Hospital Center campus on North George Mason Drive and less than three miles from the Inova Fairfax campus in Merrifield.

“The primary purpose of the proposed facility will be to decompress high emergency department utilization on the nearby Virginia Hospital Center campus and provide the surrounding community with an important and currently unavailable care option — emergency department services co-located with urgent care services,” the application states.

“In addition,” it continues, “the medical services ... will be provided at a fraction of the cost for services typically furnished at conventional emergency departments or hospitals.”

Per the application, VHC expects to see 19,556 patients a year at the Graham Center facility, largely Fairfax County residents who live within a three- to five-mile radius of the site. Though there is an emergency component planned, VHC expects the use “would maintain a very light ambulance service,” and “no ‘Code 3’ ambulance traffic, which typically involves lights and sirens.”

Stanton said he's worked on this project since before the pandemic, initially negotiating with the owner of Harvest Moon to lease that space. But the restaurant's owner died during those talks, Stanton said, which ultimately led to the acquisition of the full retail strip.

The new building will be designed with “varying architectural features and windows,” with an exterior “comprised of durable materials, including masonry, either brick or stone, with complementary modern metal accents.” VHC “will be demolishing an aging, dilapidated building and replacing it with a high-quality, attractive one-story building that will significantly improve the value and appearance of the Subject Property.” Stanton said VHC hopes to get underway as soon as its application is approved by Fairfax County.

VHC obtained a certificate of need for a CT scanner at this location in 2022, Stanton said.

The health system has been on an [expansion tear of late](#), recently proposing a 146-bed acute-care hospital to provide psychiatric and addiction treatment at 601 S. Carlin Springs Road, opening an outpatient pavilion and expanding its portfolio of primary and ambulatory care centers and clinics.