USF to build centers for 1-stop health care

The medical school dean sees the new medical building on campus and another at Tampa General as a way to deliver many services in a single visit.

By LISA GREENE
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — The University of South Florida wants its two new medical buildings to be more than fancy new construction, the medical school's leader said Tuesday.

The $100-million Center for Advanced Health-care project is supposed to pave the way for medical care that puts the patient first, said Dr. Stephen Klasko, medical school dean and vice president of USF Health.

"It's not just about the science, it's about the delivery of services," Klasko said. "Instead of patients moving from doctor to doctor to doctor, doctors will move where the patients are."

For example, Klasko said, when a woman goes to her doctor for an annual exam, she often has to make three separate appointments, usually at separate locations. There's the doctor's checkup, a separate mammogram and then a separate osteoporosis test.

Klasko envisions a setup where a woman could go for a single appointment and get all three procedures done at once.

The center will be staffed not just by doctors, but also by USF physical therapists and public health scientists. Students in medicine, nursing, physical therapy and public health all would train there.

Over the next two years, USF plans to add about 20 faculty members to help staff the center, Klasko said.

Both buildings will be equipped with imaging equipment as well as patient exam rooms.

The first building, located on the USF campus, will also have eight outpatient operating rooms and five endoscopy suites. It will include primary doctors, specialists and other caregivers who work in teams devoted to specific topics, including women's health, sports medicine, brain health and digestive disorders.

The $64-million, 194,000-square-foot building will be six stories.

The $27-million south building will be at Tampa General Hospital on Davis Islands. Because it's at the hospital, the seven-story, 126,000-square-foot building won't have operating rooms.

Construction on the Tampa General building is set to start this month and be complete in April 2007. Work on the USF building is slated to start later this spring and be finished in December 2007.

The center also will include $15-million for more sophisticated electronic medical records and other technology.

The project will be paid for by state grants, private donors and a $47-million bond taken out by the USF medical practice group.