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Miami-Dade Health Department to move to FIU Model clinic will work with medical, public health and nursing faculty

MIAMI (Sept. 26, 2007) — Florida International University and the Florida Department of Health have signed an agreement intending to relocate the department's Miami-Dade headquarters to FIU-University Park.

The new building, to be completed in 2010, is expected to house a new clinic and labs where FIU faculty and students will work along side Department of Health practitioners, doctors and researchers.

Deputy State Health Officer Lillian Rivera said: "This partnership will be a model not only for Florida, but for the nation."

FIU President Modesto A. Maidique is confident that the agreement will enhance learning and research opportunities at the university.

"This agreement will provide our students in a variety of health professions access to diverse populations," explained FIU President Modesto A. Maidique. "At the same time, Department of Health clients will come into a unique, dynamic learning and research environment."

The estimated \$27 million, 94,000-square-foot building is planned to go up near the northeast edge of University Park in west Miami-Dade County, adjacent to the new College of Medicine. The FIU College of Medicine, which will have an innovative curriculum based on a community-centered approach to medicine, is expected to admit its first class in the fall of 2009.

"Having the Department of Health on campus will strengthen our ability to integrate medicine with public health and other disciplines," said College of Medicine John Rock, who in addition to a medical degree, holds a Master of Public Health degree.

The plans are for the Department of Health building to be joined with the Robert Stempel School of Public Health, which is one of only 39 accredited schools of public health in the U.S., and the second in the State of Florida to receive this recognition.

Interim Dean of the Stempel School Michele Ciccazzo said that occupying the same building will certainly amplify opportunities for academic collaboration.

Also nearby will be the FIU College of Nursing and Health Sciences, which includes programs in nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, communication sciences and disorders, health information management, health sciences, and athletic training. A new, state-of-the-art, 103,000 square foot building for the College of Nursing and Health Sciences will also be constructed by December of 2009, contiguous with the College of Medicine and the DOH and Stempel School facilities in the developing Health Sciences Center at the FIU-University Park.

“It is a great opportunity for the Miami-Dade County Health Department team to work with FIU in pursuit of our common goals. We look forward to enhancing public health services in our community,” said Maribel Zayas, Interim Administrator Miami-Dade County.

“We find that our mission of promoting and protecting the health of our community through prevention and preparedness is perfectly aligned with FIU’s current programs and plans for the new College of Medicine,” said Rivera. “We are quickly developing a synergistic relationship that will clearly benefit all South Floridians.”

Rivera said that this partnership between DOH and FIU will facilitate the enhancement of the disease/disorder diagnostic capabilities of the DOH through collaboration with FIU faculty and will make it easier to secure joint research grants. One of the long-term plans for the relationship is to establish a nationally-recognized public health center or institute to serve as a resource for all of Florida.

“We are fortunate to have this opportunity for collaboration,” said Maidique. “Only a few universities around the country have department of health offices right on their campuses and it clearly works to the advantage of both parties and all the residents of the area.”

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Florida International University was founded in 1972 and is Miami’s only public research university. With a student body of more than 38,000, FIU graduates more Hispanics than any other university in the country. Its 21 colleges and schools offer more than 200 bachelors, masters and doctoral programs in fields such as engineering, international relations and law. FIU has been classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a “High Research Activity University.” In 2006 FIU was authorized to establish a medical school, which will open in 2009. FIU’s College of Law recently received accreditation in the fastest time allowed by the American Bar Association.