

## St. Mary's to open office with pediatrics sub-specialists in St. Lucie West

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PORT ST. LUCIE — Rather than make Treasure Coast parents continue to take their children to West Palm Beach to be seen by its pediatric sub-specialists, St. Mary's Medical Center is opening an office in St. Lucie West.

Tenet Healthcare Corp., which owns and operates St. Mary's Medical Center, the only children's hospital between Fort Lauderdale and Orlando, recently closed on a five-year lease for 3,396 square feet in the Westview Plaza, southeast of St. Lucie West Boulevard and Interstate 95. Shirley Harris, associate broker with Treasure Coast Commercial Real Estate Inc., represented St. Mary's in the deal.

Patti Patrick, St. Mary's director of business development, said the office in St. Lucie West will be the West Palm Beach hospital's first satellite office.

Westview Plaza is a two-story, Class-A office building erected in 1998. It has a total of 30,753 square feet, most of which already is occupied. One of the existing tenants is Pediatric Associates, which has 20 other branch offices in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Patrick said pediatric sub-specialists, such as those in neurosurgery, nephrology, infectious diseases and orthopedics, will come to the office on a rotating basis. The office also will have a perinatologist, an obstetrician for women with high-risk pregnancies.

"St. Mary's Medical Center and the Children's Hospital at St. Mary's are excited to bring these medical specialties to the residents of the Treasure Coast," Patrick said. "These physicians will provide services to the communities that were previously unavailable, resulting in better access to care and convenience for patients and their families."

Patrick said the St. Mary's office probably will open sometime in mid-April.

"We're not coming up to compete with doctors in the Treasure Coast, but we do see a lot of kids from that area, so we want to improve their access to care," Patrick said.

Dr. Michael Sonenblum, lead physician in Pediatric Associates' St. Lucie West office, said he thinks having the sub-specialists from St. Mary's will be good.

"Some of the surgical specialists in our area won't see very young kids," Sonenblum said. "Our patients could use the availability of the sub-specialists right here in Port St. Lucie as opposed to traveling to West Palm Beach."

Rodney Smith, CEO of Lawnwood Regional Medical Center and Heart Institute, said, "We encourage pediatric specialists to come to the Treasure Coast and welcome them as our new partners in serving this community.

"We hope they will also support those families in need in using our top-rated hospitals right here in this region, instead of asking families to drive an hour or farther south for surgical procedures or hospitalization."

Martin Memorial Health Systems, which is building an 80-bed hospital in Tradition, has a "good working relationship with St. Mary's" and refers patients there on occasion, spokesman Scott Samples said.

"It's important to make sure the needs of the community are met," Samples said.



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