

Vet hospital finds purrfect spot to grow

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STAFF WRITER

LEVITTOWN — Lower Bucks County is getting a new veterinary hospital.

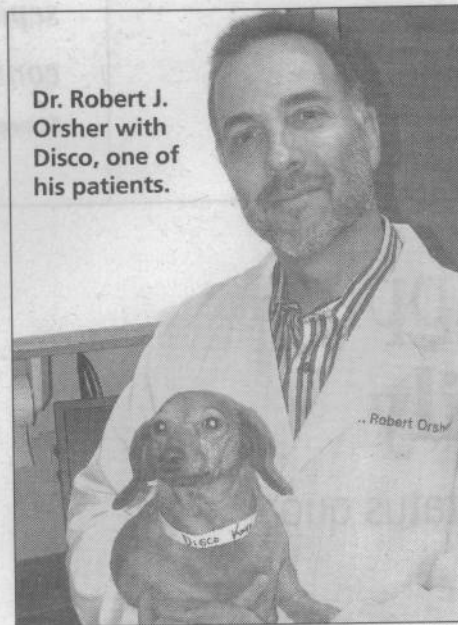
Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Center, a 24-hour specialty and emergency referral hospital for animals, is moving from its current home on Old Lincoln Highway in Langhorne to a planned facility four times larger on New Rodgers Road in Levittown.

Construction of the \$5 million, 21,000-square-foot veterinary hospital, which will feature \$750,000 in new equipment, is expected to begin next month and open next March.

Among its features will be a dedicated intensive-care unit, a CT scanner, a linear accelerator for radiation therapy, digital radiography, ultrasound, echocardiography, endoscopy, two surgical suites, multistation treatment room, and separate dog and cat wards.

"Right now we provide intensive care, but the patients are mixed in with the rest of the population," said Dr. Robert J. Orsher, the hospital's chief of surgery and co-medical director. "At the new hospital we will have a separate ICU with its own dedicated nursing staff and specially trained doctors board certified in emergency and critical care."

The building will also have 15 outpa-



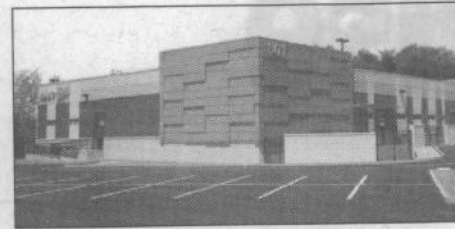
Dr. Robert J. Orsher with Disco, one of his patients.

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tient examination rooms, client waiting room and hospitality areas, doctor and administrative offices, meeting and presentation rooms, and kitchen and break room facilities for employees. In addition, the hospital will also be a local site of Antech.Diagnostics, a national veterinary diagnostic laboratory based in Morrisville, N.C.

"We've been looking to expand for the last five to six years," Orsher said. "We had several fits and starts along the way, and we've looked at several different locations."

The group began looking at a potential site in Bensalem and received land development approval from Lower Southampton Township officials for a site along Street Road in Trevoise before eventually working with the Buccini/Pollin Group Inc., a real estate company based in Wilmington, on the site in



Artist's rendering of the new center.

Levittown.

Orsher said they had looked at the site on New Rodgers Road years ago, but weren't able to finalize a deal. The doctors renewed their interest in the property after Buccini/Pollin came back to them to see if they were still interested in the site.

They were.

"The location is near an exit ramp off I-95, so you have a lot of direct visibility and easy access," he said. "Access is important. We have a lot of clients [in addition to those from Lower Bucks County] who come to us from Northeast Philadelphia and a larger number from New Jersey."

Orsher said he also likes the "campus feel" of the location, where the hospital's neighbors will include the University of Phoenix. He said the additional space will also allow the facility to expand its pro-bono services for animal rescue organizations such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and PAWS (Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society).

His partners in the venture are Dr. Laura W. Tseng, the hospital's clinical manager of emergency services, and Dr. Alan Klag, who specializes in internal medicine.

Tseng is looking forward to the new building's dedicated ICU unit and a separate ER space to help facilitate intensive care for the hospitals most critically ill patients.

"This new facility," Klag said, "will allow us to continue the expansion of the specialty medical services that our clients desire."

PZS Architects of Philadelphia is the project architect, C. Raymond Davis and Sons Inc. of Kimberton is contractor and Bohler Engineering of Chalfont is the site engineer.

A former professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine for 10 years, Orsher opened Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Center in 1994.

The hospital has grown to 24 veterinarians and a total staff of 110 full- and part-time workers. The center typically sees between 40 to 60 dogs, cats and other animals a day.

Orsher said in recent years pet owners have sought more advanced treatments for their pets.

"Pet owners are more educated about the care options that are available," he said. "People come in here with piles of sheets of paper they downloaded off the Internet."

To keep up with that growing demand, while searching for a larger home, the doctors opened a 1,500-square-foot annex to the main 5,000-square-foot building in 2009.

The new hospital will be nearly four times the size of the old one.

"As the practice continues to grow," Orsher said, "I can easily see us having 140 employees."



Tseng



Klag

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