

From the Business First

:<http://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/news/2014/09/17/golisano-3-5m-gift-supports-health-center-for.html>

Golisano \$3.5M gift supports health center for disabled at N.F. Memorial

Sep 17, 2014, 12:14pm EDT Updated: Sep 17, 2014, 1:20pm EDT



[Tracey Drury](#)

Buffalo Business First Reporter- *Business First*

[Email](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Google+](#)

Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center will create a new community health center funded in part by a \$3.5 million gift from philanthropist [B. Thomas Golisano](#).

The largest gift in hospital history will support construction of the Golisano Center for Community Health, which will provide integrated health-care services to adults with special needs and their families.

Announced Wednesday morning during a news conference, the gift comes from the Golisano Foundation, one of the nation's largest foundations dedicated exclusively to supporting programs that encourage and commit to inclusion, acceptance and opportunity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The center will be built adjacent to the hospital's emergency department on 10th Street, and will be connected to the heart center building by a pedestrian walkway. Construction on the two-story, 23,000-square-foot building is expected to begin in March 2015 and be completed by year's end.

Calling it one of just a few centers of its kind, hospital officials said the center will house a range of services and programs, including primary care, mental health, health home care management, housing assistance, community outreach, satellite services, social services, health insurance enrollment, financial assistance counseling, wellness education and the training of healthcare professionals.

[Ann Costello](#), director of the Golisano Foundation said in a prepared release people with special needs have poorer health outcomes than those without disabilities and limited access to preventive and ongoing care.

"Memorial's innovative approach to delivering health care will change that for our most vulnerable citizens," she said. "In this new center, people with special needs can access

integrated primary care and other critical services at a single accessible location that leverages the resources of both a major medical center and community partners. Also important, health care providers will learn to care for people with special needs.

[B. Thomas Golisano](#), is the billionaire who founded Rochester-based **Paychex** and a former owner of the **Buffalo Sabres**. The foundation says since the late 1990s Golisano's philanthropy has totaled more than \$200 million, including \$10 million for a [new science center](#) at **Niagara University**.

[Joseph Ruffolo](#), hospital president and CEO, said the center continues efforts by the hospital to transition from a traditional hospital to a center for community health in collaboration with other providers and community agencies.

"The Medical Center is moving away from solely providing hospital-based episodic care to managing population health within the region, with a specific focus on a population with special needs that is far too often dependent on using hospital and emergency room resources," he said.

The site will also house The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara and Project Runway; as well as a self-advocacy office for Rivershore Inc., an agency affiliated with **People** Inc. that serves individuals living with disabilities.

Additionally, the **YMCA Buffalo Niagara** will provide wellness education and fitness training for individuals, including people with developmental disabilities, chronic diseases and others who need special instruction to engage in physical exercise.

Other partners will include area universities, who will participate in the center's learning hub through internships and workforce development opportunities in such areas as care coordination, navigation and care management. It will also provide classrooms for wellness and health education training for community residents and caregivers.

Tracey Drury covers health/medical, nonprofits and insurance