

EDITORIAL: Golisano funds giving area a big boost

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Tom Golisano is certainly making his presence felt locally.

Just last year, Niagara University opened its B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences. The 50,000 square foot facility is dedicated to the laboratories for both the chemistry and biology departments at the university. The \$33 million facility became possible only after Golisano, the Paychex chairman and philanthropist, presented the campus with a donation of \$10 million after his foundation was approached by the Rev. Joseph Levesque, NU's president at the time.



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On Wednesday, the Golisano Foundation was back in town to present Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center with a gift of \$3.5 million to help construct a community health center on the hospital's 10th Street campus.

The money will allow the hospital to expand several of its programs and will create a space for the medical center's Health Home program and partner organizations to connect with the vulnerable populations they serve.

The hospital began its partnership with the foundation last year, signing on to the Healthy Communities Initiative, a global effort sponsored by the philanthropic organization in partnership with the Special Olympics aimed at improving coordinated care for people with intellectual disabilities.

Ann Costello, the director of the Golisano Foundation, said the center will create a hub of coordinated care for people with intellectual disabilities and other vulnerable populations.

The planned 23,000 sq. foot building, with an estimated price tag of \$5 million, will also provide space for other hospital partners like Rivershore, Inc. and the YMCA. The center, which will be built on an empty lot next to the medical center's Heart Center of Niagara on 10th Street, will also include kiosks for community partners to help them better connect to patients.

The new facility will pair nicely with the Heart Center of Niagara next door and is another step in upgrading the 10th Street campus and surrounding neighborhood.

It will also upgrade Memorial's effort to push primary care and other preventative measures to cut

down on emergency room visits to the hospital.

“Memorial’s ongoing transformation, moving away from a traditional hospital to a center for community health, we feel, is improving and sustaining the health and well being of our community,” Memorial President and CEO Joseph Ruffolo said. “Our transition places a very distinct emphasis on coordinating services for the most vulnerable population among us to prevent them ... from falling through the cracks.”

It’s good to see a project that will benefit both the community and Memorial Medical Center receive such generous support.

It’s another healthy step for the city of Niagara Falls.