County breaks ground on new health center in San Pablo

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Contra Costa County broke ground Friday on a new West County Health Center on part of the former Circle S mobile home park site in San Pablo.

The $45 million, 53,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility will replace the existing county Health Center on 38th Street in Richmond, one of eight run by the Contra Costa Health Services Department and the only one still occupying its original quarters, which have become obsolete.

The health center logs about 84,000 patient visits annually and offers 53 different services including cardiology and pediatrics.

Dignitaries attending Friday's ceremony included Congressman George Miller; State Senator Loni Hancock; State Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner; County Supervisor John Gioia; County Health Services Director Dr. William Walker; Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin; San Pablo Vice Mayor Cecilia Valdez; Contra Costa Building Trades Council CEO Greg Feere; West Contra Costa Healthcare District board member Eric Zell; and other West County officials.

County officials give Miller much of the credit for enabling the project to proceed by helping the county snare $12 million under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The balance of the construction cost will be financed with proceeds of a 30-year county bond issue.

The new health center is expected to open in July 2012.