

New West Orange facility makes debut

15,000-square-foot building will expand clinical capacity for area's underserved

Zufall Health proudly unveiled its new, cutting-edge facility at 49 Mount Pleasant Avenue in West Orange in December, marking the completion of the health center's first-ever ground-up construction project.

The new building represents a significant expansion in clinical capacity in response to the area's surging need for affordable health care services. Designed by Carminio Architecture and constructed by the Whiting-Turner Contracting Company, the impressive, three-story structure features eight medical exam rooms, six dental operatories, behavioral health consult rooms, patient education and wellness activity areas, laboratory services, dispensary, and a demonstration kitchen.

President and CEO Fran Palm said, "In comparison to our existing office at nearby 95 Northfield Avenue, this facility will allow us to double our medical



capacity, triple our dental capacity, and bring all of our West Orange operations under one roof...and we are thrilled to continue expanding our contribution to the economic vitality of West Orange."

Still serving on the Board of Directors at 99 years old, Founder Robert Zufall, MD expressed his amazement at the facility in an interview with NJ Spotlight News, stating, "It exceeds my wildest expectations. I'm blown away." Compared to the single room in Dover where he



Exterior of 49 Mount Pleasant Avenue. Credit: Joseph Fagan, West Orange Public Information Officer.

established the health center more than 30 years ago, "this is more beautiful, more modern, more lovely."

The beautiful facility became a reality through the philanthropic support of organizations such as the Delta Dental Foundation, Healthcare Foundation of NJ, Hyde and Watson Foundation, Partners for Health Foundation, the friends of Zufall Dentist and Dental Residency Director Howard Rappoport, DDS, the Zufall family, and many others. Their generosity proved vital during the challenges of the pandemic, supply-chain disruptions, and unforeseen delays in the construction process.



Robert Zufall, MD, and his daughter, Peg Zufall-Roberts, were among the enthusiastic crowd of friends, partners, government officials, and funders at the ribbon cutting ceremony.



FUNDER SPOTLIGHT

BD joins the road for good health

Global medical technology company BD has long included Zufall Health in its philanthropic endeavors. In its most recent contribution through its charitable affiliate, the BD Foundation, the company has provided \$150,000 in funding to Zufall's mobile medical unit replacement campaign.

SVP of External Affairs and Zufall Health Foundation Director Shade Cronan expressed gratitude: "We appreciate BD for bringing us closer to securing a new mobile medical unit. BD's generosity is critical to breaking barriers in health care access and transforming lives, particularly for people who cannot easily reach a Zufall site."

Cronan added that the new vehicle's exterior will feature BD branding. "The new mobile unit, like the existing one, will regularly visit schools, farms, senior residences, food banks, and other community spaces. The BD name and logo will be visible on the outside of this doctor's office on wheels."

Zufall's relationship with BD dates to its receipt of the inaugural "Helping Build Healthy Communities Award" in 2013.



This game-changing donation from BD not only elevated Zufall's capabilities in diabetes care but helped the health center engage on the national level.

BD has also provided significant funding to ÁNDALE, Zufall's nutrition and fitness program for children with obesity, among other initiatives. Given BD's history of thoughtful and generous support for innovative patient programs, asking BD to take a lead philanthropic role in the mobile unit's replacement made sense, Cronan said.

BD is enthusiastic about the vehicle as the latest development in its partnership

with Zufall. Sien Avalos, Director, Social Investing & Vice President for the BD Foundation, said, "BD is proud to support Zufall Health in their mission to provide access to quality, affordable health care to people and communities who experience barriers to care. Our pledge supports a new mobile medical unit that delivers care to our New Jersey neighbors and furthers our company's driving purpose which is to advance the world of health. We congratulate Zufall Health on their innovative approach to expand access to those patients who need it most."

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Much to look forward to in 2024!



As we begin a milestone year, I am thrilled to share some exciting news and upcoming events.

Our founder, Robert Zufall, MD ("Dr. Bob"), celebrates his 100th birthday on June 3. More than 30 years ago, Dr. Bob and his late wife, Kathryn, established a modest, one-room clinic in the basement of a Dover church that evolved into the robust, multi-site health system that is today Zufall Health. He continues to serve on the health center's Board of Directors.

Throughout this special year, we are planning many events to share more

of the Zufall story with you. Stay tuned for invitations to fundraisers, art shows, and our annual Be Well Benefit. These gatherings provide excellent opportunities to connect, celebrate, and learn more about our mission.

We also encourage you to schedule a private tour at any Zufall office. With the recent completion of our new West Orange building and dental facilities coming to Somerville and Plainsboro, there is much to see and explore. We are also making progress on a standalone school-based health center in Franklin Township in Somerset County.

As we grow, we continue efforts to expand our Zufall Health Foundation Board of Trustees. Please reach out if you are a good fit for service. Later in this issue, you'll read about our newest member, internal medicine physician Katharine Palla, DO, and her inspiration for joining Zufall.

Above all, we express our heartfelt gratitude to YOU for your unwavering support of our patients. Your contributions make a meaningful impact on the lives we touch.

Be Well!

Shade Cronan

YOUR DONATION AT WORK

More comprehensive system of recovery support underway

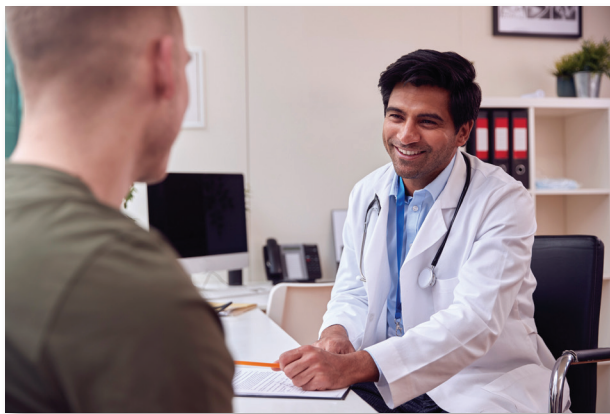
Zufall Health is preparing to transform care for patients with substance use disorders (SUDs), thanks to the New Jersey Safety Net Innovation Program (NJ SNIP), a new initiative funded by the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation and implemented by the Camden Coalition.

The \$300,000, two-year NJ SNIP grant will allow Zufall to significantly expand its delivery of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and wraparound recovery support services. MAT is an evidence-based approach to SUDs, particularly opioid and alcohol use disorders, that combines medication with counseling and behavioral support.

Accessing MAT in Zufall's service areas is challenging, with few certified addiction medicine physicians, and even fewer willing to accept Medicaid recipients or uninsured patients. President and CEO Fran Palm noted that while some Zufall medical

providers have gradually adopted MAT and seen positive outcomes, the opioid epidemic's current landscape and community concerns have highlighted the need for a more substantial response.

"Although we've cared for many patients who need MAT, we have not had the infrastructure to sustain the coordinated care that is required for comprehensive, ongoing treatment. With open-ended, flexible funding, the NJ SNIP grant provided a critical opportunity to integrate a full-fledged MAT program



into Zufall's whole-person, trauma-informed framework," Palm said.

The program involves existing primary care providers and behavioral health case managers, along with two newly created positions – a Recovery Support Services Coordinator and a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist. Additionally, there will be increased support from an external consultant. In the first two years, the health center aims to serve 225 patients through the expanded MAT program, a more than 50 percent increase, while enhancing the level of patient support.

SVP of Behavioral Health Services Sarah Aleman, MSW, LSCW, one of the MAT program's supervisors, is enthusiastic about the progress ahead.

"Treatment for SUDs has long been siloed and stigmatized. By increasing opportunities for patients to discuss these conditions in a primary care setting, the expectation is not only to improve and save more lives but to also shift the perception of SUDs from moral failings to treatable, chronic diseases."

Why I Give

Zufall provider returns to roots to serve community's most needy

Joining Zufall Health after 26 years in private practice was a natural transition for community service-minded Katharine Palla, DO. From a young age, the Morris County native happily dedicated many volunteer hours to local housing and food assistance efforts with her family.

Before she came to Zufall, the internal medicine physician had become increasingly frustrated by the profit-driven focus of health care delivery, often to the detriment of patients. But it wasn't until the back-to-back losses of her brother and father in 2021 that Palla finally decided to redirect her professional journey toward mission-focused work.

"These tragic events made me pause and think about what I was doing with my

professional skills and gifts," Palla recalls. "It was time to focus my efforts in an area that matters most to my family and me."

Already familiar with the health center, Palla connected with Chief Medical Officer Rina Ramirez, MD, to discuss employment opportunities. She came on board in January 2023.

Now a year into her role, Palla embraces the strong team dynamic and finds joy in making a difference in people's lives every day, noting, "I just find so much fulfillment in the collaborative and patient-centered approach to primary care we have at Zufall. Plus, by caring for our patients, I am simultaneously supporting the community I've lived in my whole life. It just makes sense."



In December, Palla joined the Board of Trustees of the Zufall Health Foundation. She looks forward to expanding her support of the health center beyond the exam room and into the philanthropic and strategic realm.

Katharine Palla, DO, earned her doctor of osteopathy degree from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, completed her residency at Morristown Medical Center, and is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Share the love with Zufall Health!

Extend your heartfelt support to our patients this Valentine's week

Donating to Zufall Health is a simple yet impactful way to contribute to your community during the most love-filled week of the year. Our health center diligently serves some of the most vulnerable and underserved individuals and families in New Jersey – from migrant farmworkers to low-income veterans to newly arrived refugee families. Your generous contribution, regardless of its size, sends a powerful message of love and affirms that everyone deserves access to affordable health care of the highest quality, just like you and your loved ones.

Did you know that there are various ways to contribute? Apart from monetary donations, the Zufall Health Foundation accepts many types of gifts. Please visit zufallhealthfoundation.org/donate for a complete list of options.

For more information about contributing to the Zufall Health Foundation and spreading the love, please contact Shade Cronan at scronan@zufallhealth.org or call 973-328-9100, ext. 1361.



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