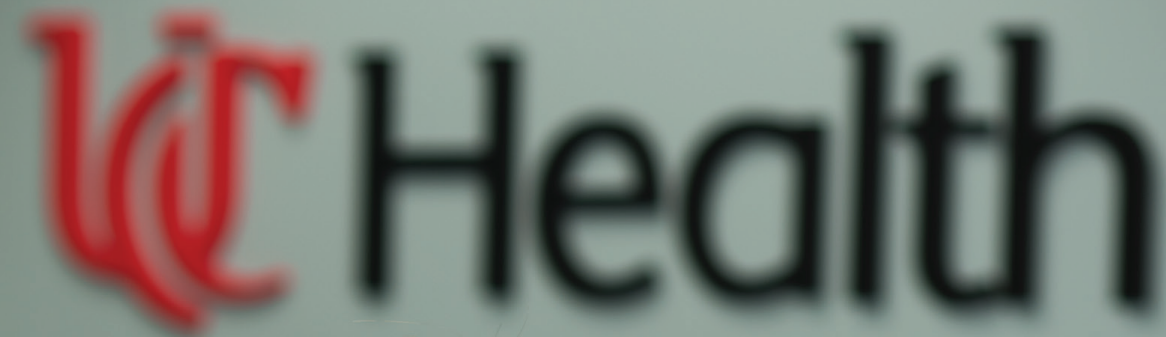


COMPREHENSIVE WOMEN'S CARE CLOSE TO HOME



UC Health Women's Center: 7675 Wellness Way, West Chester, Ohio 45069. Also at: 4460 Red Bank Expressway, Cincinnati, OH 45227. You can reach them at 513.475-UC4U or visit their website at www.uchealth.com/women.

Written by Katie Southerland • Photography by Brian Ambs

In Cincinnati, many women visit multiple offices to get their health care, which can make receiving treatment a complicated process. But in the fall of 2012, UC Health acquired Lisa Larkin, MD & Associates, an internal medicine and gynecology practice specializing in women's health issues, specifically mid-life women's health and menopause. Now, UC Health is poised to open the region's newest Women's Center located in West Chester. This comprehensive medical home for women is part of the region's only academic medical center and is a model for advancing women's health care.

After earning her medical degree from Yale University's School of Medicine and completing her internal medicine residency at the University of Chicago hospitals, Dr. Lisa Larkin, director of UC Health Women's Center, taught and practiced at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine for 11 years, eventually opening her own practice. It was during that time she noticed a void in comprehensive women's health care.

Practicing solo, Dr. Larkin treated many women for menopausal and female sexual health issues. Over the years, she built her practice to include seven providers practicing in primary care and women's health medical specialties.

"What we found is that our patients gravitated towards one-stop-shopping," Dr. Larkin says. "They liked seeing their primary care physician for menopause and other issues, and seeing their gynecologists without having to go to different practices."

Dr. Larkin traveled across the country, visiting centers such as the Cleveland Clinic that provided the type of comprehensive care she envisioned. After seeing how the model worked elsewhere, she met with hospital CEOs around the Tristate looking for a partner.

"It was very clear that UC Health was the right partner for many reasons," Dr. Larkin says. "I always had an interest in resident medical student education, so that piece was a good fit for me. And the new leadership at UC stood behind me and my vision for an integrated multi-discipline center. It was really exciting to come back to UC and get their support."

The plan for the Women's Center at West Chester comes to fruition this spring.

A satellite location on Red Bank Expressway opened last fall and includes 8,000 square feet and multiple physician offices. The new office will have 26,000 square feet, 50 exam rooms, a maximum of 50 physicians, and will accommodate up to 100,000 patients a year. The practice aims to provide women with comprehensive, evidence-based care from adolescent transitional care and gynecology to obstetrics, mid-life and older adult women.

The Center will provide care through five main programs – primary care; comprehensive breast care; obstetrics and gynecology; integrative medicine and wellness, menopause and sexual health internal medicine subspecialties and plastic surgery and skin care. Part of the Center's mission is to serve as an educational and wellness resource, provide education for medical students and residents and ongoing education for physicians.

"My three-year goal is to have a comprehensive month-long elective where medical students and residents rotate between all practices," Dr. Larkin says. "For example, they would spend specific time with providers who specialize in menopause, breast surgery, integrative medicine, plastic surgery, cardiology and bone health to name a few. My goal is to wrap everything into this facility - clinical, academics and research."

Dr. Larkin and other physicians will also host lectures in the Center's community education and resource center. She hopes the community will see these educational tools as "a resource they can turn to."

Moreover, women's health clinical research will be in the forefront since the Center is part of an academic medical center. For example, current research in menopause is studying the underlying reason women choose to get menopausal care from a treatment center rather than a physician.

"We want to be evidence-based and travel in the direction the data points us," Dr. Larkin says.

Her five-year plan is to have a multi-disciplinary research program and a two-year fellowship in women's health, much like they have at the Cleveland Clinic.

Dr. Larkin says, "I want this to be a comprehensive model, to be a place women treat as their medical home." ❖

