Highmark Health and Carnegie Mellon University announced a $35 million grant from Highmark Inc. to support the construction of a new student health, wellness and athletics center at CMU. The 160,000-square-foot building will, for the first time, unite critical student well-being services under one roof on the university’s Pittsburgh campus.

Rising on the corner of Tech and Margaret Morrison streets, the project will preserve and enhance the existing Skibo Gymnasium for recreational use and construct a modern addition on the surrounding site. The expansion will include space for University Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, and CMU’s intercollegiate athletics program, as well as wellness and mindfulness programming, recreational sports, religious and spiritual life activities, and sports medicine. The building will face Schenley Park and serve as a gateway to campus.

“Highmark Health is committed to continuing to invest in the western Pennsylvania region, both in our continued expansion of Allegheny Health Network (AHN) and in our partnerships with organizations who share our vision for a health system that provides remarkable experiences to consumers,” commented David Holmberg, president and CEO of Highmark Health.

“This new centralized facility will improve access to health services, counseling, wellness and athletics activities, with the goal of supporting students in building habits that will be the foundation for their future health, lives and careers.”

The state-of-the-art facility will accelerate Carnegie Mellon’s vision to support students in practicing positive self-care behavior and
maintaining their physical and psychological well-being as they pursue a life-changing education. The integrated approach is part of the university’s model for assisting students to develop their whole selves through initiatives inside and outside of the classroom.

In 2013, CMU and Highmark Health established a research partnership to identify and accelerate the development of health information technologies with the potential to impact patient care and the patient’s experience. To date, Highmark Inc. has invested $16 million efforts, by AHN, Highmark Health and Highmark Inc. in collaboration with CMU schools or faculty members. This partnership has been funded by Highmark Health and has allocated up to $2.5 million annually.

The research partnership has several projects already underway, which vary in maturity from being conceptual in nature to more developed prototypes with a demonstrated value proposition. CMU is helping Highmark Health and AHN to better understand opportunities for technologies to find large-scale deployment, and the technical and commercial hurdles that could keep them from maturing.

Highmark Inc.’s investment also supports Make Possible: The Campaign for Carnegie Mellon University, which was publicly launched in October. The campaign seeks to raise $2 billion in support of the university’s aspirations, which include a focus on the CMU experience. To date, more than 42,000 donors have contributed more than half of the goal, accelerating CMU’s leadership at the nexus of technology and humanity.

“Helping our talented students develop and maintain healthy bodies and minds is paramount to ensuring their lifelong success, both personally and professionally,” CMU President Farnam Jahanian said. “We are delighted to extend our partnership with Highmark Health to bring to fruition our vision for a unified, comprehensive facility that supports many facets of students’ well-being.”

In December 2017, the organizations further evolved their relationship with new strategic agreements that cover all research projects, as well as other types of projects such as course sponsorship and design in the partnership, including the establishment of the Disruptive Health Technology Institute as well as the endowed Highmark Distinguished Career Professor.

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