

Crain's Health Pulse

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Mount Sinai opens new urgent care center

The new urgent care center tucked into Mount Sinai Health System's newly renovated, glass-paneled ambulatory care building on Union Square East has an edge over CityMD and other providers, said Dr. Kelly Cassano, chief of ambulatory care at Mount Sinai Downtown.

"What will separate us from some of the others is that within the building we have 29 or so other medical/surgical specialties," Cassano said. "If a patient comes in and they need follow-up care, we can make an appointment for them to be seen by a specialist in the same building. In some cases they can actually be seen on the same day."

The new center, which opened in mid-September, is seeing about a dozen patients each day. It marks the latest development in the health system's \$500 million project to create a network of care below 34th Street that includes more ambulatory services and a miniature version of Beth Israel.

So far some 600 Beth Israel staff members have moved to other positions throughout the system with equal or higher pay, a Mount Sinai spokesman said. —C.L.

Joint-venture endoscopy center comes to the Bronx

An endoscopy center with a complex ownership structure has opened in the Bronx on West Burnside Ave., according to an announcement by Physicians Endoscopy, the facility's management company.

The ambulatory surgery center, which has four procedure rooms, is a joint venture between Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center, Morris Heights Health Center, four Bronx-Lebanon physicians, four independent physicians and three Physicians Endoscopy executives, according to the certificate-of-need application filed to open the facility. The ownership was split into six different classes. Bronx Lebanon's Special Care Center, a skilled-nursing facility, owns the largest portion, though it's still a minority stake.

The owners initially filed the application for state Health Department approval more than two years ago.

"Obtaining successful CON approval with so many different class owners was a huge challenge," Carol Stopa, senior vice president of business development at Physicians Endoscopy, said in a statement. "The ability for the physicians, from several different practices, to remain organized throughout the lengthy regulatory process is a testament to their continued partnership."

Physicians Endoscopy operates nearly 60 GI-focused ambulatory surgery centers in 15 states, including 22 surgery centers in New York, according to its website. The company, based in Jamison, Pa., [bought minority stakes](#) in 10 New York surgery centers in February from Frontier Healthcare Holdings. —J.L.

State seeks coordinator for HIV-related projects

The state Health Department's AIDS Institute is seeking a Medicaid HIV special needs plan to coordinate the HIV-related projects being pursued by DSRIP networks throughout New York.

The request for proposals, [posted online](#), highlights a need to address "disparate quality standards and outcomes" and "avoid confusion and duplication in outreach efforts to HIV health care providers." The coordinator is expected to share best practices and promote engagement with new funding models among HIV providers.

Eight performing provider systems have already started coordinating their efforts through the NYC DSRIP HIV/AIDS Coalition.

Amida Care, a Medicaid HIV special needs plan in New York City, is working with the coalition to identify technical support needs and advocate for policy changes that would advance DSRIP goals around HIV and population health, according to its website.

The amount of the contract is not listed. The deadline to indicate interest in applying is Oct. 10. —C.L.

AT A GLANCE

PUERTO RICO: The Puerto Rico Hospital Association accepted medicine and supplies that were donated by the Greater New York Hospital Association, UJA–Federation of New York and the Afya Foundation. The supplies arrived on a private flight from Kennedy Airport. Health concerns are mounting in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria due to difficulties accessing medical care, supplies and clean water, [The Wall Street Journal reported](#).

CHIP: The Senate Finance Committee passed a bill Wednesday that would reauthorize funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program for five years, [Modern Healthcare reported](#). However, the bill would phase out enhanced federal funding for the program starting in fiscal 2020. CHIP expired on Sept. 30.

BRAIN SURGERY: [Quartz posted a video](#) that shows how brain surgeons at Boston Children's Hospital teamed up with Hollywood special effects shop Fractured FX to create a virtual 14-year-old patient for training medical students in delicate surgical procedures.

TWELVE STEPS: By rejecting medication-assisted therapy for drug addiction, 12-step recovery programs might be exacerbating the opioid crisis, [a recovering heroin addict wrote in STAT](#). "By turning their backs on people like me on medication-assisted therapy to kick opioid addictions, these programs are prolonging addiction and contributing to overdose deaths," wrote Elizabeth Brico, who got off heroin with the assistance of buprenorphine.

CORRECTION: Tammy Clark is senior vice president and regional operating officer for the northeast region at The Doctors Company. Her title was misstated in an Oct. 3 Health Pulse article, "Malpractice insurer enters New York market."

Northwell Health acquires major orthopedics practice on Long Island

Northwell Health said Wednesday that it has acquired Orlin & Cohen Orthopedic Group, Long Island's largest private orthopedics practice. The deal gives the state's biggest health system a greater foothold on the South Shore of Nassau County and a new source of surgical cases.

Orlin & Cohen has 35 physicians working in offices in Garden City, Lynbrook, Rockville Centre, Cedarhurst, Merrick, Massapequa, Woodbury and Bohemia. In addition to orthopedists, the practice has pain-management specialists and radiologists. It offers imaging services, physical therapy and occupational therapy.

"Strategically, they're a great fit for our organization," Northwell Health President and Chief Executive Michael Dowling said in a statement. "Working together, we're expanding our provider network and establishing Northwell as the preeminent provider of orthopedic care in the metropolitan region."

The orthopedists at Orlin & Cohen primarily perform surgeries at South Nassau Communities Hospital in Oceanside. That relationship is in jeopardy with Northwell's acquisition.

"If we had our druthers, that relationship would continue," Michael Passet, Orlin & Cohen's chief executive, said. He added that he's unclear whether South Nassau will continue to embrace a practice that is wholly owned by Northwell. South Nassau [said in May](#) that it is negotiating an agreement to join the Mount Sinai Health System. A spokesman for South Nassau declined to comment on the Orlin & Cohen deal.

The acquisition agreement offers Orlin & Cohen a significant degree of autonomy. Passet will lead Orlin & Cohen Medical Specialists Group, which will act as a separate clinical division of Northwell.

Passet said the decision to join Northwell was motivated by the shift toward value-based payments by insurers, which will make practices more responsible for managing the costs of

procedures. While Passet believes change will be gradual, he thinks it will be valuable to have a larger partner. A Northwell spokesman and Passet declined to disclose the sale price.

"If that's where the market is heading, I'd rather be aligned with an organization better positioned to develop the right contacts and economic relationships," he said. "It was, 'Where do we want to be five to 10 years from now?'"

Passet said Mount Sinai expressed interest in Orlin & Cohen late during its negotiations with Northwell, but his decades long familiarity with Northwell executives provided a level of comfort.

"It's not just the economics; it's relationship-based," he said. "There's a lot of trust. We've been on the same page all along as to what we want this model to be."

The sale will not result in changes to Orlin & Cohen's staff, which includes about 500 employees, or to its current locations, Passet said. A few of the practice's doctors will begin accepting Medicaid plans as part of the agreement.

Passet said part of his role with Northwell will be to add physicians in orthopedics and other related specialties. A partner like Northwell can be an attractive option to physicians looking for financial security.

"They're looking for opportunities," Passet said. "I now have Northwell's checkbook, so to speak, which makes rapidly integrating other docs and practices into this entity that much easier." — J.L.