

Columbia Journalism News

 Listen to Radio 116

...New York City completes its most ambitious count of the homeless population...Some advertisers are finding ways to get ordinary people to distribute marketing messages for free...There is new legislation to help curb illegal dumping in the city's waterways...All this and much more on this edition of Radio 116 for March 11

BronxBeat

Columbia News Service

Radio 116

Columbia News Tonight

Deadline in Depth

February 28, 2005

February 21, 2005

February 14, 2005

February 7, 2005

January 31, 2005

January 24, 2005

Archives

NYC24

Documentary Photography

Photojournalism

Covering Religion

Archives

Columbia Journalism School

Deadline in Depth

HEALTH

East Harlem Hospital Opens New Ambulatory Center

By Emily Wilson

Feb 8—In the past, patients entering Metropolitan Hospital Center in East Harlem for minor surgery had to go to one place to be admitted, another to pay, somewhere else to have their blood drawn, and yet another for an X-ray.

All that changed today, with the opening of a new 25,000-square-foot ambulatory procedure pavilion on the 11th floor.

"It's wonderful," said Morgan Ramezani, the hospital's director of guest services. "Everything is right here in one place and it's so pleasant and organized."

Having check-in, pre-surgery procedures and discharge all in one spot will save patients time, said Benjamin Chu, the CEO of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation.

"They don't have to run around to six different places," he said. "If you have a procedure, it's very anxiety producing, and to add hours of red tape to that is not right."

At an unveiling of the new center today, after the lute music and the chaplain's prayer, staff members addressed the crowd through a faulty microphone, praised their colleagues for their dedication to serving the community and talked about how much better things will be with all the ambulatory care services in the same place.

Chu said the new pavilion would benefit the staff as well as the patients.

"It's not just for economies of scale, but so we can learn from each other," Chu said. "It's the feng shui of health care. We're trying to do things not just with more respect for our patients, but for our staff as well."

Chu said the hospital had done more colonoscopies than any other in the health care corporation, 18,000 in 2004, and that meant the staff was helping to diagnose colon cancer, one of the most treatable cancers.

"In doing this, we can actually make an impact," he said.

Jose Sanchez, a vice president of the hospital, said that the new ambulatory surgery pavilion would help the hospital fulfill its mission of helping immigrants and the poor.

"We've all heard the statistics about disparity in health care," he said. "We're expanding health care to people who need it the most."

After a few jokes about surgeons and shaky hands, Mark Wallack, the chief of surgery, cut the ribbon

on the new facility and the crowd munched sandwiches and fruit, while exclaiming over the new space with its curved walls, frosted glass and views of the East River.

Eddie Chang, an assistant director of the hospital and an architect who helped design the facility, surveyed the proceedings before going to pick up his young son for a Chinese New Year celebration. Chang said he was also excited to see the project completed after a year and a half of work. He said he tried to make the space as welcoming as possible for the patients.

"It really doesn't matter what your social status is," he said. "Whether you can pay or not you still deserve the same treatment."

© 2005 The Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University