

CRAIN'S
Health Pulse

Integrated family health clinic opens in Queens

Strong Children Wellness Medical Group, an organization that sets up clinics integrating primary care with community-based organizations in the city, is opening its first physical location today.

The 10,000-square-feet site in Jamaica, Queens, will provide primary care services as well as mental health and social services in partnership with nonprofit organization The Child Center of NY.

The location initially will serve children and adolescents up to age 21, but it will bring on a family medicine practitioner by September, said Dr. Suzette Brown, co-founder and chief operating officer of Strong Children Wellness. The center is expected to be able to see about 200 to 300 patients a month; walk-in services will be available once the pandemic abates.

Patients often get health care at a facility but are referred externally for mental health or social services needs, Brown said. This new hub seeks to address health needs in a more holistic way by making it a one-stop shop, she added.

"The health care provider often doesn't know the needs of the patients beyond the clinic, and we wanted to flip that by bringing primary care into an organization that also provides mental health and social services under the same roof," Brown said.

The clinic features a collaborative model where records are mutually accessible between the health care provider and the community social services and mental health partner, Brown said. Counselors and social workers can access relevant medical records in a HIPAA-compliant manner, and a physician could review mutual patients with relevant caseworkers, she said.