

NUMC's New Primary Care Center Increases Access to Care

The new Primary Care Center at Nassau University Medical Center (NUMC) increases access to medical care for community members and provides the opportunity to reduce Emergency Department visits, a goal of DSRIP.

The Center, located inside NUMC, offers patients access to internal medicine, pediatric care, and women's health, and features modern exam rooms, spacious waiting rooms, and art deco furnishings. In its first year of operation there were 69,000 patient visits. Patients can schedule an appointment, or walk in if they are sick or in need of immediate care.

The Center is a recognized Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), which, per the National Committee for Quality Assurance, "research shows improves patient care and reduces costs," both of which are components of the Triple Aim—a framework developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement for optimizing health system performance by simultaneously accomplishing three critical objectives that include improving the health of populations; improving the patient experience of care (including quality, access, and reliability); and reducing the per capita cost of health care.

"We are a PCMH practice, and this helps us build a better relationship between a patient and their clinical care team," says Judith Eisele-LaPlante, RN, practice administrator. "Should a patient not have a primary care doctor, we can provide one."

A significant benefit of the Center is that symptomatic patients no longer need to go from one physician's office to another for their care; it's all available in one location.

"Because the Center is in the hospital, we can easily bring a specialist in to look at a patient who is having trouble breathing or experiencing chest pain," says internist, Chris Elsayad, MD, FACP. "These 'curbside consults' are real time-savers and help to reduce costs for both the patient and NUMC. They also ensure that patients get the specialty care they need in the moment, which can help to improve outcomes."

Community outreach to patients who have previously presented at NUMC with chronic illnesses or risk factors is another priority of the Center.

"As part of DSRIP goals, we are doing more outreach to these patients to get them to come to the Center to be seen before they have a significant problem," says Samia Qazi, MD, internist. "We are empowering patients with the knowledge and tools they need to manage their illnesses proactively. When possible, we also involve family members in these discussions—particularly with chronic conditions."