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HEALTH CARE

Episcopal Health Services opens \$55M outpatient center in Far Rockaway



Episcopal Health Services opened a five-story ambulatory pavilion on Friday. (Episcopal Health Services)



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Episcopal Health Services opened a \$55 million ambulatory pavilion in Far Rockaway on Friday, aiming to expand specialties such as oncology and behavioral health in a neighborhood that has long faced gaps in medical care.

The five-story ambulatory center, located at 19-20 Brookhaven Ave., offers a range of primary and specialty services, including behavioral health, obstetrics and

gynecology, endoscopy and gastroenterology. The center is directly across the street from St. John's Episcopal Hospital, which is operated by EHS and is the only full-service hospital on the Rockaway peninsula.

The Rockaway Peninsula has faced gaps in specialty services for years. The region **lost radiation oncology services** after the closure of the financially distressed Peninsula Hospital in 2012, forcing residents to travel to other parts of the city or Long Island for care.

The pavilion, which spans 65,000 square feet, aims to close that gap with the addition of Episcopal Health Services' new **cancer center**, an \$18 million facility that opened in February. The cancer center marks the first time radiation oncology services have been available on the Rockaway peninsula in more than a decade, according to EHS.

The ambulatory pavilion is part of the health system's strategy to increase access to medical care directly to the geographically isolated Rockaway peninsula, reducing residents' need to travel long distances, Dr. Donald Morrish, CEO of EHS, said. The health system has invested in its outpatient footprint as more services move outside of hospitals, and it has focused on expanding preventive care, he said.

"The hospital remains the anchor, but it's not the ceiling of health care here on the peninsula," Morrish said.

EHS received capital for the project from a range of funders, including the state Department of Health.