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## NYHQ Thrives, Though Other Facilities Close

By Richard Gentilviso

In the aftermath of the loss of another hospital in the borough, New York Hospital Queens is thriving. "NYHQ is a hospital second to none," Deputy Borough President Barry Grodenchik said.

While Peninsula Hospital in Far Rockaway closed its doors forever last month, and St. John's, Mary Immaculate and Parkway Hospitals all closed as well in the last three years, NYHQ is a bright spot in Flushing as evidenced by a presentation of its services, specialties, and modernization program at the April 17 meeting of the Queens Borough Cabinet.

"We are an incredibly vibrant and growing organization," NYHQ Vice President for Professional Services and Strategic Planning Mary Godfrey RN said.

A 519-bed voluntary and community teaching hospital, NYHQ opened in Queens in 1957 as Booth Memorial Hospital. In 1992, the hospital became an affiliate of the New York Hospital Cornell Medical Center and was renamed the New York Hospital Medical Center of Queens in 1993, although it is commonly known as New York Hospital Queens. In 1997 the New York Hospital and the Presbyterian Hospital merged to create the New York Presbyterian Hospital Care Network, of which NYHQ is a part. A new west wing opened in 2010.

A core concern is "what the priorities are for health care in the borough of Queens", Godfrey said. "Our goal is to match the community's needs with available resources." To that end, NYHQ has many meetings with community organizations to make sure the understanding of health care in the hospital matches that of the community.

"There are 2.4 million people in Queens, the most culturally diverse county in the U.S.," Godfrey pointed out. "Fifty-four percent speak other languages and 12.9 percent are below the poverty line." In response, NYHQ employs 3,572 people full-time, approximately 40 percent of whom speak more than one language. In addition, more than 60 percent of the medical staff speak more than one language.

One problem caused by the closings of other hospitals in the borough is the shrinkage of emergency room services. "It's a big problem in Queens," NYHQ Vice President for Ambulatory Care and Emergency Services Maureen Buglino RN, MPH said. "Our volume has been growing steadily, five to seven percent increases annually."

NYHQ had 2,700 ambulance transports and 130,000 emergency room visits. Buglino said many people use emergency services inappropriately, although that was not a significant issue at NYHQ. Buglino did express a need for more urgent care centers in the borough. NYHQ is a designated stroke center and a Level I trauma center, one of only three in Queens. With \$4 million in funding, the emergency room is expanding by 9,200 square feet to add 10 additional bays. "That's going to help us," Buglino said.

The biggest challenge ahead for NYHQ is cost of operation, Godfrey said. "\$650 million a year plus an additional \$20 million for capital projects, [and] by 2020, national healthcare costs will double to \$4.6 trillion."

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