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**Today's News** Tuesday, August 23, 2011

**TCU for NYH-Queens**

The Public Health and Health Planning Council has given New York Hospital Medical Center of Queens conditional approval to create a 16-bed transitional care unit. It was one of three TCU proposals approved at the council's recent meeting. The others were from Good Samaritan Hospital, in Suffern, and Rome Memorial Hospital, in Oneida County. The Queens project will involve renovating 5,700 square feet on the hospital's eighth floor at a cost of \$33,372. The original application was submitted last November as part of a state request for such proposals for a TCU demonstration program. TCUs can reduce lengths of stay and prevent readmissions by letting patients fully recover before being released while freeing up acute-care beds.

**Behavioral Health Alliance**

Four Long Island behavioral health providers have announced that they will align as an LLC nonprofit and form an independent practice association in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The Long Island Behavioral Alliance Corp. will be formed by PSCH/Pederson-Krag, F-E-G-S Health and Human Services System, Family Service League and the Mental Health Association of Nassau County. L.I. Behavioral Alliance's goal is to strengthen the network of behavioral health providers serving Long Island and improve regionwide access to all levels of outpatient services for behavioral health and substance abuse. The agencies will host a forum after Labor Day that will be open to all Long Island providers interested in additional developments. For information about the event, call Jennifer Wortmann, (718) 559-0518, or [jennifer.wortmann@psch.org](mailto:jennifer.wortmann@psch.org).

**Disaster Planning**

GNYHA has issued a new publication to help health care providers with emergency preparedness and response activities. "Hospitals had terrific emergency preparedness plans in place long before 9/11, but that day of course gave those plans an importance and sense of urgency that hasn't waned in the last 10 years," said a GNYHA spokesman. The 56-page document, *Emergency Preparedness Plans and Tools: A Resource Guide for Health Care Providers*, provides specific information on weather-related disasters, flu pandemics, power outages and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive events. It is not yet online, but a PDF is available by emailing [ltam@gnyha.org](mailto:ltam@gnyha.org).

**At ailing Peninsula Hospital, rumors of closure**

Monday proved to be chaotic for the embattled Peninsula Hospital. The board of the Queens hospital met with possible investors while reports surfaced that the state Department of Health was saying patients should be moved. One employee reported that DOH started closing the hospital at midday, issuing orders to discharge patients. At the time, the board was conducting due diligence with investor groups.

Negotiations took place with investors on Monday morning, said Joseph Mure Jr., a Peninsula board member. The board was set to meet at 5:30 p.m., half an hour after MediSys Health Network's formal withdrawal as Peninsula's corporate sponsor, he said. The board would consider a Chapter 11 filing, closure and the firing of Peninsula President Robert Levine.

In an email in which he described himself as a former board member, Louis Caucig said early in the day that the board would decide after the 5:30 meeting if the hospital would remain open or follow the closure plan. But a source said that the board was divided on which of two investor groups to back, assuming either actually would forward with capital.

Was DOH pressing for Peninsula's closure Monday? According to one source, the agency ordered the hospital to shut down its emergency department on Aug. 24.

"DOH is interested in the health of patients, and so are the doctors on staff. We are making sure we are adhering to the rules," Mr. Mure said. A spokeswoman for DOH did not respond to requests for comment.

In a statement, MediSys said that it was "cooperating, as needed, with requests made by both Peninsula and DOH to aid in the orderly transition for the current patients and the Rockaway community."

**At A Glance**

**FACEBOOK TO THE RESCUE:** HHS challenged software application developers yesterday to design Facebook apps that will help people handle personal medical emergencies, or natural or man-made. Recognizing that thousands use Facebook to reach out for help in an emergency, HHS's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is running the contest. The team that develops the best application wins \$10,000, free admission to next year's Health 2.0 conference. Second place gets \$5,000. Information is at <http://www.hhs.gov>.

**CORRECTION:** An Aug. 22 item on brain research misstated the name of the NYU Langone Medical Center Neuroscience Institute.

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