

# County Health Mall brings new model for quality care

**H**istory was made last month with the ribbon cutting and grand opening of the new Erie County Health Mall at 1500 Broadway in Buffalo. The mall is a public-private collaboration that is the first of its kind in Western New York and brings together primary, dental and mental health care providers under one roof. Erie County owns the facility, and we lease space to our partners from Catholic Health, the University at Buffalo's School of Dental Medicine, Lake Shore Behavioral Health, and Mid-Erie Counseling and Treatment Services. Together, we opened the doors to this state-of-the-art facility and welcomed residents inside to see what this new health care model has to offer.

Open to all residents regardless of where they reside, the Health Mall offers an array of services focused on providing primary and chronic disease care in order to better manage patients' conditions before they lead to hospitalization. Catholic Health is providing adult primary care and internal medicine services; obstetrics, gynecological and prenatal care services; and physical therapy at the mall, along with operating a

National Committee for Quality Assurance Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home and onsite laboratory service center.

The mall is located at the site of the former Dr. Matt Gajewski Health Services Center, which was closed by the prior county executive, leaving a large segment of residents without access to primary, dental and prenatal care. Predictably, people needing these and other basic health services went to area emergency rooms, driving up costs and clogging facilities with patients who had basic health care needs. Research from the Office of the Erie County Inspector General showed a steady increase in the number of emergency room visits since the former Gajewski site was closed in 2009. Through its expanded health care options, the mall is expected to reduce the number of these visits by more than 3,400 in its first year of operation.

Through a \$2.6 million capital project investment, the Erie County Department of Public Works oversaw a complete renovation of the space at 1500 Broadway,

including the installation of new electrical and climate systems, leading to the mall's LEED Silver-certifiable designation, which refers to Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design. While the mall facility is owned by Erie County, the health care providers on site are partners in this initiative and will fully staff and manage their own operations while Erie County provides security and maintenance functions.

The opening of the Health Mall represents a major change in how primary care services are delivered and also demonstrates the necessary commitment of dedicated partners to making that change

possible. Erie County is leading the way with this new model for the provision of health care, and I encourage residents countywide to come and see the success.



**MARK  
POLONCARZ**

Erie County  
Executive