



In this artist's rendering of the new Urban Health Plan facility in Longwood, the building will be six stories high and will accommodate 20,000 new patients.

A clinic grows in the South Bronx

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A HOMEGROWN health network is doubling its capacity to serve the South Bronx.

Urban Health Plan has raised \$55.5 million to build a new, six-story facility on Simpson St. in Longwood.

With the 54,000-square-foot clinic, UHP expects to add 20,000 new patients and double its number of annual primary care visits to 400,000.

Paloma Hernandez, the network's CEO, said the new facility "will make it possible for us to continue to ... improve the health outcomes of our community."

UHP plans to break ground next month and open the new clinic in about two years.

Founded by the legendary South Bronx physician Richard Izquierdo in 1974, UHP currently operates a clinic around the corner, on Southern Blvd. But the space is overflowing with patients suffering from chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and hypertension, said Hernandez.

The Bronx is the state's least healthy county, according to recent health reports.

"We've outgrown our existing facility," said Hernandez.

The network's goal is to keep poor patients without health insurance out of

emergency rooms, through free testing, exercise classes and checkups. UHP patients can see primary care physicians and some specialists.

Amanda Pinales first visited UHP eight years ago. She was at a drug store with her husband, buying a home pregnancy test, when another shopper recommended the Southern Blvd. clinic, which offers free tests.

"We've been there ever since," said Pinales, 31, of Parkchester, a mother of three who has taken parenting and nutrition classes through UHP.

To build its new clinic, UHP is relying on a handful of funding sources, including a \$12 million federal stimulus grant, money from the City Council, allocations by state Sen. Ruben Diaz Sr. and Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., and millions in financing in the form of federal tax credits.

Enterprise Community Investment, Nonprofit Finance Fund and Stonechange Community Development teamed up with Goldman Sachs to allocate the credits.

The new clinic will more than triple the number of exam rooms in UHP's existing Longwood clinic from 55 to 169. UHP also operates clinics in Hunts Point and Corona, Queens.

The project, slated to be built on what is now a parking lot, is expected to create 250 construction jobs and 110 permanent, full-time jobs for doctors, medical assistants and receptionists.

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