



Harris County Hospital District

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MEDIA RELEASE

Ben Taub General Hospital Dedicates New Urgent Care Center

HOUSTON (Jan. 31, 2007) – Ben Taub General Hospital is opening the doors of a newly-constructed urgent care center that will enable staff to treat patients in a more appropriate setting than the emergency room.

“The urgent care center supports our RightCare program, which aims to have patients seen in the most appropriate setting by the most appropriate staff,” explained Jeff Webster, administrator of Ben Taub. “The combination of the two programs, the urgent care center and RightCare, will help us decongest our emergency center so that we can truly address trauma and emergency patients in a very quick and timely way.”

“Many of the patients that come to the emergency center are not truly emergency patients,” said Peter Dancy, associate administrator of Ben Taub. “We want to help these patients find a primary medical home to free up our emergency center so staff can focus on providing exceptional emergency medicine and trauma care to patients who really need it.”

The new urgent care center replaces four small exam rooms used temporarily to treat non-emergency patients. The 4,400-square-foot space contains eight new exam rooms fully equipped and electronically wired. The larger area also accommodates large stretchers and wheelchairs for transporting patients to other parts of the hospital, said Eugene Sirls, project coordinator with the Planning Department.

The entrance to the urgent care center is located at the northeast end of the hospital’s first floor, adjacent to the Ginni and Richard Mithoff Trauma Center.

Assigned nurse practitioners will staff the urgent care center from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Friday. Staff can accommodate up to 50-60 patients a day.

“Adding the urgent care center to our continuum of care in our emergency center services department is a critical step,” explained Webster. “We’ve always had an urgent care component in our program, but it’s been imbedded in the heart of the emergency room and often would get overshadowed by trauma. So the addition of this center allows us to provide a full spectrum of care to patients that need urgent or emergent treatment.”

“We want to make sure our patients receive the best possible care in the best setting,” added Pam Russell, emergency center nursing director. “It’s all about offering the right care at the right place, at the right time, for the right level of care and at the right cost.”

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