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Expanded urgent care for children

Centers will occupy existing offices

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Two new centers dedicated to offering parents access to after-hours pediatric urgent care are celebrating their grand openings this week, according to the physicians group behind the facilities.

Melville-based Allied Physicians Group, an independently operated network of pediatricians in the metropolitan area, has opened its first urgent care centers in Medford and Franklin Square. The network of 150 clinicians said the new centers, called Allied Pediatric Urgent Care, will operate out of existing pediatric offices and offer care for children and young adults from 4 p.m. to midnight, and on weekends, without an appointment.

Allied has 36 pediatric offices

across Long Island, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island as well as Westchester, Rockland and Orange counties, according to the doctor network's website. Most of its locations, 23, are in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

"We really want parents to have options around what works for their life," said Dr. Shannon O'Malley, regional medical director of urgent care and telemedicine for Allied Physicians Group. O'Malley said by housing urgent care centers at existing pediatric offices, follow-up appointments can be set up more seamlessly, while overhead costs for Allied are brought down.

Additionally, because the centers will be located inside existing practices, Allied's urgent care business will be able to bill a patient's insurance for a traditional sick visit, making copays

lower than in a stand-alone urgent care facility, O'Malley said.

"Money for everybody is tight right now," she said. "We have no urgent care copays when you come to Allied, so you're getting a sick visit co-pay, which is a huge difference."

The two new centers, at 2799 Rte. 112, Suite 11 in Medford, and 380 Dogwood Ave. in Franklin Square, planned opening ceremonies Monday and Thursday, respectively. Both had soft openings at the end of last month and have provided care to 200 patients so far, proving the need is there, O'Malley said.

Co-locating urgent care and pediatrics could offer a chance to connect patients and their

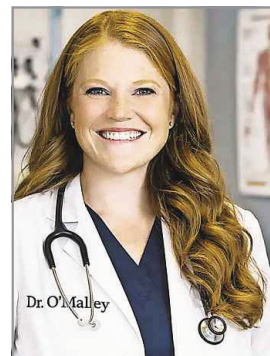
families to preventive health care, said Wendy Darwell, president and CEO of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, which represents hospitals on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley.

"It has been a challenge for many people to get access to primary care and sometimes pediatric care," Darwell said. "That's generally a good thing because primary care is always cheaper than emergency care."

The physicians group plans to open an urgent care at an existing pediatric office in Riverhead on Oct. 25, and another on Staten Island on Nov. 2, O'Malley said.



Allied Physicians Group's existing office and new pediatric urgent care center on Route 112 in Medford.



Dr. Shannon O'Malley, Allied's regional medical director of urgent care and telemedicine.

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