

Health Center at The Center for Discovery Attains Highest Designation

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The Center for Discovery's Discovery Health Center in Harris has received the highest possible designation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance. The Discovery Health Center is one of only two ambulatory care clinics of its kind in New York State to achieve Level 3 status for Physician Practice Connections-Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH).

PCMH is a promising model of health care delivery intended to improve the quality and efficiency of care by identifying practices that promote partnerships between individual patients, their families, and their physicians instead of treating patient care as the sum of several episodic office visits.

"The patient-centered medical home promises to improve health and health care," said NCQA President Margaret E. O'Kane. "The active, ongoing relationship between a patient and a clinician in medical home fosters an all-too-rare goal in care: staying healthy and preventing illness in the first place. PPC-PCMH Recognition shows that The Health Center at The Center

for Discovery has tools, systems, and resources to provide its patients with the right care at the right time."

To achieve recognition, the Health Center's Treatment Team demonstrated the ability to meet the key elements embodying characteristics of the medical home. The standards are aligned with the joint principles of the Patient-Centered Medical Home established with the American College of Physicians, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, and American Osteopathic Association. The designation is valid for three years.

"We're honored to receive this national recognition," said Patrick Dollard, president of The Center for Discovery. "We take great pride in the quality and commitment of all our medical professionals and our fully integrated whole-system approach to care, and we encourage our patients and their families to be our partners in health care. This designation recognizes how efficient and effective we are in providing comprehensive care for the multiple special needs of our population."

With nearly two dozen physicians from an array of disciplines, as well as dozens of other medical personnel on staff, the Discovery Health Center has long provided comprehensive, fully-coordinated patient-centric care to children and adults with developmental disabilities and multiple special needs. It

has recently incorporated an advanced electronic medical record keeping system to improve patient care and to enhance communication among providers, both within The Center for Discovery and in hospital and health centers located elsewhere.

Dr. Regina Olatin, Medical Director at The Center for Discovery, explained that the Discovery Health Center provides on-site primary and sub-specialty medical and dental care. Each patient has a dedicated primary physician who coordinates care with all of the other medical professionals involved in that resident's care. The use of telemedicine, electronic health records, and personal consultation ensure that "all medical decisions are fully coordinated, rather than fragmented and independent of each other."

Beyond hands-on patient care, the Discovery Health Center is the first health care facility in the country to be registered with the U.S. Green Building Council and a recipient of the USGBC's LEED Certification as a model of eco-friendly construction. The operation of the Health Center is shaped by the belief that the quality of patients' lives is directly affected by their physical surroundings, so the 28,000 square foot building features environmentally-sound, non-toxic building materials, natural lighting, heated pathways and an open, barrier-free design conducive to access and maneuverability for all patients.