



Courtesy of mountnittany.org

Mount Nittany Medical Center will open a new wing next week.

Hospital set to open new wing

By Mike Hricik
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Mount Nittany Medical Center's newest expansion — a state-of-the-art \$38 million East Wing — is slated to open next week to patients.

When the wing opens, the hospital will be able to administer care to 60 more patients. About 20 jobs will be created with the wing's opening, said Janet Schachtner, chief nursing officer and senior vice president of patient services.

The Commitment to Distinction Foundation, a charitable fund committed to supporting the East Wing facilities, has raised more than \$12.5 million, hospital communications manager Nichole Cook Monica said.

Joe and Sue Paterno donated \$1 million to the foundation in June 2009, Cook Monica said.

The 65,000 square foot addition was built to ease room problems, Schachtner said.

"We needed the additional space. We actually had multiple days at full capacity," she said. "The East Wing satisfies our capacity needs and expands our critical care."

Construction began above standing floors in May 2009. Construction ended in June 2010, but workers are still completing last-minute preparations for opening ceremonies, Interim Vice President and Plant Services Supervisor Lou Brungard said.

Following cleaning next week, the East Wing will receive patients during the first week of August, Brungard said.

The expansion also serves as an outlet of innovation for the hospital.

Several advanced features were included in the addition. Oxygen outlets were added to every bathroom to prevent staff members from stretching extension tubes from room walls, and patient flow concerns were addressed through design. Cabinet space has expanded to aid nurses, Schachtner said.

Patient lifts were included in all rooms and a computerized pharmaceutical system will be implemented to provide streamlined patient access to medications.

Mount Nittany Medical Center is the first hospital in the state to initiate such a program, Brungard said.

Existing facilities were also improved during building. Additional parking was added to accommodate new patients. Storm water management systems and lighting was also updated, Brungard said.

The East Wing design process was receptive to ideas, Brungard said.

"It included employees and staff. We constructed model rooms and bussed folks down to our warehouse for their feedback and evaluation," Brungard said.

Emphasis was placed on comfort, Schachtner said.

"Based on patient and staff needs, it was very obvious that we needed to improve noise, privacy and comfort," she said. "We wanted to try as much as possible to give our patients opportunities for single rooms to the extent that we can."

Benefits will change

Rising costs have PSU changing health plans to fit the 2011 budget.

By Casey McDermott
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Penn State officials said university employees can expect changes to the university's health benefits plan in 2011 as an effort to "control rising costs."

Expected changes include added "cost-sharing" measures, but university spokeswoman Annemarie Mountz said the exact changes have yet to be finalized and that Penn State isn't sure when more details will be made available.

The necessary changes will affect all of the university's employees, Mountz said, because the current rate of health care costs at the university was on track to become more than the university could handle.

Without changes, she said, costs are expected to reach more than \$206 million by 2011 — up from the more than \$180 million the university currently budgets.

"It's the old formula: What goes out has to be balanced by what comes in — you can't spend what you don't have," she said. "Health care benefits are one of the quick-

est rising costs from the university with the appropriation as it is, and with the financial difficulty the state has because of the recession."

Reducing the rate of health care cost increases was also one of the goals listed in Penn State's most recent Strategic Plan, implemented from August 2009 through 2014.

"This is one of the important actions that is to be added in first year of strategic plan," Mountz said. "So that's why this is happening now."

According to the plan, considerations for future health care changes might include additional wellness education and incentives, different rates for employees who engage in high-risk behavior and changes to employee deductible and co-pays.

Penn State's insurance is administered through Highmark Blue Shield, but the university is self-insured.

This is an important distinction to make, Mountz said.

"If you have a doctor's visit, you have a co-pay, and Penn State pays the rest of it," she said. "Every penny that's paid to cover healthcare costs comes from either the employee or Penn State."

Highmark spokesperson Phil

Neubauer said the company provides insurance for multiple universities, and larger organizations tend to operate through the company's "Administrative Services Only" plan.

Neubauer also said it's becoming more common to see health care plans that are set up similar to a savings account where employees pay into a fund and take out as needed.

"Especially as there are so many changes in the health care industry, more and more employees are being asked to shoulder more of the load," Neubauer said.

Employers, he said, will often match the contributions their employees make to these accounts.

Penn State isn't exempt from these changes, Mountz said, and the university is making efforts to avoid hurting employees' benefits.

"Health care costs are one of the biggest expenses that employers have, not just at Penn State and not just in higher education, but across the nation," Mountz said. "Penn State works hard to provide the quality benefits that Penn State wants to provide in a way that won't bankrupt the university."

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UPUA holds safety session

Freshmen learn about potential dangers

By Kathleen Loughran
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) held a sexual assault and underage drinking information session geared towards freshmen students at 7 p.m. Thursday in 173 Wilbard.

Audra Hixson from the Center for Women Students spoke to a small group of students first about sexual assault awareness. Hixson said the center sees at least 100 students a year who seek help, 90 percent of whom are usually women.

Hixson also said that 90 percent of the time people are victimized by non-strangers, and about 75 percent of the time alcohol or drugs are involved.

"These two topics definitely weave together pretty tightly," she said. "Oftentimes a person passes out and then tries to piece things back together. Unfortunately one of the most vulnerable groups on campus are freshmen."

Hixson said the main reason freshmen are particularly vulnerable is because they commonly experience a "false sense of security."

Overall, Hixson stressed the importance of knowing what sexual assault is and being able to be a resource for someone if it is needed.

"It's important as a friend to not be judgmental," she said. "It's important to remember that you're not the detective. You need to be supportive."

Hixson said the university offers many resources for those who have been victimized, such as free counseling and medical care.

After Hixson finished talking, Penn State Police Officer Aaron Ciambotti spoke mainly about the problems with underage drinking.

"I have a job because of alcohol. In almost everything we deal with alcohol is a problem," Ciambotti said.

"We're not bloodthirsty guys that can't wait to give citations. If

we stop you, there's a reason."

Ciambotti said he doesn't want to stop people from having fun, but he said his concern is when people drink too much and create scary situations.

"When you cross the line — when you become a danger to yourself — it becomes an issue," he said.

Karen Hetrick said she was glad that she took the time to come to the special information session.

"They gave very good advice to look for yourself and your friends," Hetrick (freshman - division of undergraduate studies) said.

"It all comes down to your decisions."

UPUA Executive Director of Freshmen Outreach Rebecca Alt (sophomore - communication arts and sciences) said UPUA is planning on having more safety events in the fall because she said it's important to continue the education.

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Pennsylvania students lead the fight for gay rights

By Julia Terruso
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

ARDMORE — Jason Goodman didn't set out last year to be the face of gay rights in Lower Merion.

He was just a college student looking for a summer job. But as he flipped through employment manuals, the openly gay resident made a discovery he deemed "shocking."

Basically, he had no equal-employment rights. And state and federal legislators weren't about to give him any.

Anyone could deny Goodman a job because of his sexual orientation, with no law to stand in the way. Nothing federal, nothing statewide — nothing even, the University of Pennsylvania senior said, "in the community that I love and have grown up in."

Fast-forward one year, and Goodman, 21, who lives in Bala Cynwyd in the township, finds himself at the fore of a small but growing trend in Pennsylvania. He is prodding Lower Merion to join 16 other municipal and county governments in Pennsylvania that have enacted laws protecting members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community from discrimination.

On July 7, Goodman and members of his group, Equality Lower Merion, watched as 13 township commissioners voted without dissent to draft an ordinance he proposed.

Next month in Doylestown, the Borough Council is poised to pass an LGBT anti-discrimination ordinance.

And in Radnor, another college student — Pennsylvania State University sophomore Taj Magruder — is trying to replicate Goodman's success in his hometown.

"We're ready to change the world, and we're not afraid to go out and to start doing it," Goodman said of this youth-driven activism.

In 21 states — New Jersey, Delaware, New York, and Maryland among them — his ardor could have been spared for other causes. But Pennsylvania legislators have been loath to consider adding an LGBT clause to the state's anti-discrimination statute.

"The whole world is inexorably headed in the direction of recognizing civil rights for these folks," said State Rep. Dan Frankel (D., Allegheny), who has introduced such legislation for the last 10 years.

"As usual, Pennsylvania is late

to the table on anything with even a semblance of progressiveness."

On one hand, Frankel said, most Fortune 500 companies provide employment protections for LGBT people. On the other, "I have colleagues who insist that they've never met (an LGBT) person."

In increasing numbers, local governments have begun to fill that void.

Area municipalities that have passed laws include Philadelphia, Lansdowne, Swarthmore, West Chester, and New Hope.

Typically, the laws forbid discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations based on sexual preference or gender identity. Most set up human relations commissions to investigate and adjudicate complaints, and to assess civil damages if necessary. Many include a public education component as well.

Federal and state laws have long banned discrimination based on race, age, religion, ethnicity, and disability.

"If you fire someone and say, 'I fired you because you're black,' you've got three laws that apply," said lawyer Katie Evers, who drafted several of the ordinances. "If you say, 'I fired you because of



Courtesy of underthebutton.com

Jason Goodman, a student at the University of Pennsylvania, gives a speech about the importance of equal rights.

your sexual orientation, there's no claim that can be brought."

As municipalities consider these laws, the questions are usually the same, said Stephen Glassman, chairman of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. "Is it necessary? Is it legal? And how much will it cost?"

To be sure, some of the laws

seem more public statement than public necessity.

"Preventing cases and addressing them sends the message that we value you, you're a part of this community, we will stand with you, we will not tolerate homophobia," Goodman said, "just like we will not tolerate racism or any other form of discrimination."

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