



## BUSINESS

# Stony Brook Medicine opens 'medical mall' at former Sears in Lake Grove



Stony Brook Medicine has opened a 60,000-square-foot multispecialty medical office in the former Sears at Smith Haven Mall. Credit: Kristy Leibowitz

**By Maura McDermott**

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A medical megamall as big as a football field is open for business on Long Island.

Stony Brook Advanced Specialty Care at Lake Grove includes primary and specialty care offices in a 60,000-square-foot space previously occupied by the Sears department store at Smith Haven Mall.

The new facility is being completed in stages. The first stage, which includes family, preventive and internal medicine, along with diabetes education, genetic counseling, neurology, neuropsychology

and pain management, opened in May. Pediatrics offices are located in an adjacent section with its own entrance and more brightly colored furnishings.

The two-story complex's second phase is expected to open in mid-2024 with orthopedics, obstetrics and gynecology offices.

## WHAT TO KNOW

- **Stony Brook Medicine's new multispecialty center** has opened in the former Sears at Smith Haven Mall in Lake Grove.
- **The center offers family, preventive and internal medicine**, along with diabetes education, genetic counseling, neurology, neuropsychology and pain management.
- **It will expand to at least 170,000 square feet**, about the size of three football fields.

The facility eventually will include all the medical specialties offered by Stony Brook Medicine along with clinical research facilities in a space that will expand to at least 170,000 square feet, and possibly as much as 270,000 square feet, with a targeted completion date of 2027, Stony Brook Medicine said.

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The center “is really going to be transformative for patient care in many ways,” Dr. Todd Griffin, vice president for clinical services and vice dean for clinical affairs at Stony Brook Medicine, said in an interview at the new facility on Monday.

It is one of several large-scale outpatient facilities opening in former retail space on Long Island. Catholic Health expects to open a \$17 million, 63,000-square foot urgent care and multispecialty facility this summer in a former Ocean State Job Lot retail store in Centereach. Northwell Health is constructing an 80,000-square-foot ambulatory medical center on the first floor of a former Lord &

Taylor. And NYU Langone Health has leased a roughly 162,000-square-foot Lord & Taylor building in Manhasset.

“There has been a push for many years to bring health care closer to consumers,” said Wendy Darwell, president and chief executive of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, a Hauppauge-based trade group. “That’s been made possible in part because of technology. You can now provide some services in an outpatient setting that would have been unthinkable decades ago.”

In addition, she said, on Long Island, “we do have an aging population, and as you age, you tend to need more care, and travel and transportation can also become more challenging. So having care that’s located close to your home, or located close to other services you might be utilizing ... is really very helpful.”

Retail centers, she said, “were already developed for the convenience of consumers, so it’s a very good fit for health care.”

## **Parking lot monitors**

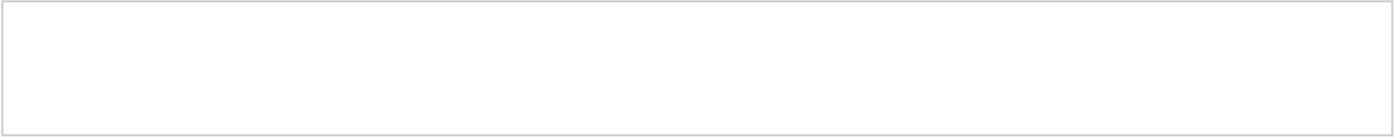
The advantages of Smith Haven Mall include plenty of parking and convenient access by road and bus, as well as its proximity to Stony Brook University Hospital, Griffin said. The hospital is four miles away. Staffers monitor the parking lot for patients who need help getting around, he said. A waiting room is stocked with padded wheelchairs for patients who need them.

The facility’s size allows patients to make appointments with numerous providers on the same day, Griffin said. The complex also includes common workspaces for doctors and other staffers to foster collaboration. A committee brings together staff from different specialties for monthly meetings about measures of efficiency and patient experience, such as how long it takes for patients to get appointments, Griffin said.

“It just improves the conversations about patient care,” he said. “It allows us to ... really understand, ‘how do we provide improved access for the patients?’”

Making it easier for doctors to communicate with each other is likely to improve care, not only by allowing them to more easily discuss particular patients, but also “just to have conversations about general disease processes, general approaches to certain conditions,” said Dr. R. Peter Manes, an associate professor of surgery at Yale University and co-author of a 2022 paper about outpatient surgical centers in the journal *Surgery*.

Working in a multispecialty center “really does improve collaboration,” Manes said. “The more that we can work together across specialties, the better.”



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