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Rehab units moving to Great Kills

New site to serve growing clientele

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ADVANCE SOUTH SHORE BUREAU

A hospital-run alcohol rehabilitation center will be relocating to two storefronts in Great Kills, while a new group home for developmentally disabled adults has been proposed by the state for the same area.

Formerly housed in Concord, St. Vincent's Medical Center's North Richmond Ambulatory Alcohol Outpatient and Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) programs will be moving to two storefronts on Nelson Avenue in Great Kills so they can better serve South Shore and Mid-Island clients, said Jill Bennett, administrator of North Richmond Mental Health Services.

In addition, a group home for eight developmentally disabled adults has been proposed for Armstrong Avenue in Great Kills by the state office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD).

St. Vincent's Medical Center is expected to start leasing space at 249 and 253 Nelson Ave. for its alcohol rehabilitation programs by November, said Ms. Bennett. The site will be open from 9 a.m.

Moving

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to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday.

The new site for the programs that have treated "thousands" of patients for more than 10 years was chosen because of the center's growing clientele, especially from the South Shore and Mid-Island areas, said Dr. Lawrence Miller, director of psychiatry at St. Vincent's North Richmond Community Mental Health Center. And unlike the program's for-

mer site, the Nelson Avenue location is equipped with handicapped ramps, added Ms. Bennett.

"We've really grown with the outpatient program," said Miller. "[The current location] has become too tiny."

Since the South Shore has the fastest- and largest-growing population on Staten Island, Miller said, the services are needed to service the Community Board 2 and 3 areas.

John Cella, director of alco-

holism services at Bayley Seton and St. Vincent's hospitals, said many of the South Shore and Mid-Island patients currently treated at the Concord center have indicated a difficulty traveling to the facility.

The alcoholic rehabilitation program — which follows the 12-step program — is for adults who suffer from alcohol abuse and their mates, Cella said. The DWI program — which is the only one of its kind on Staten Island that is certified by the state office of Alcoholic Abuse and Substance Abuse Services — is a 16-week treatment program for people arrested for driving while under the influence of alcohol, he said.

Seventy percent of the programs' clients are women, and 35 to 40 percent of the people treated are a spouse or mate of the alcoholic abuser, Cella added. A total of about 125 people are treated by the two programs, said Cella.

Miller said that the programs will be run under a "low-profile operation," with no disruptions to the surrounding community.

"There will be no people congregating outside. Most patients are of the working class," said Miller. "It will be discreet and well-maintained."