

# CRAIN'S Health Pulse

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## Montefiore Opponents Lawyer Up

Riverdale residents hired a Wall Street law firm to fight Montefiore Medical Center's planned ambulatory-care center in the northwest Bronx neighborhood. The Committee to Protect Riverdale and several co-op and condo buildings have retained **Christopher Rizzo** of Carter Ledyard & Milburn, who promised to "explore all legal options for stopping the construction of this facility." That includes getting the state Department of Health to put the outpatient center through an approval and public-review process that opponents assert is needed to comply with a new law sponsored by legislators representing Riverdale. The proposed center would stand six stories high, lowered from 11 floors after vigorous community opposition. Moving the facility might also be a possibility, Mr. Rizzo indicated. "There are some very dense parts of this neighborhood that might be suitable, and locations that might welcome this project," he said, "but a quiet residential street is not the place." The law firm has advised the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Long Island Rail Road and the Lower Manhattan Development Corp. on development projects.

## Methodist, Too

Montefiore Medical Center, of course, isn't the only New York hospital feeling the sting of community opposition. The legal battle between New York Methodist Hospital and a community group fighting its expansion continues. Preserve Park Slope, which sued to stop the hospital's expansion, said it raised at least \$10,000 in donations last month to help pay legal fees. New York Methodist and the Board of Standards and Appeals filed separate court papers responding to the group's lawsuit. Preserve Park Slope plans to file a rebuttal by Oct. 10. A court date has not yet been set. The community group hopes to raise more funding from a \$3,500 matching grant, according to [its blog](#).

## Nonprofit CEO Pay

Chief executives at New York City area health-related nonprofits earned 54% more than their peers across the country, reports Charity Navigator. Cost of living, competition and level of experience among local CEOs at nonprofits were among the reasons for higher salaries in the region, said Ken Berger, president and CEO of the Glen Rock, N.J., nonprofit research company. The median pay package in the city—\$208,000 in fiscal year 2012—was up 2% over the 2011 level. Nationally, nonprofits paid CEOs with health-related charitable missions \$135,000. The health category ranked third after education and the collective arts, culture and humanities sector. Executive salaries at large for-profit companies can approach eight figures, but that disparity doesn't trigger a brain drain at charities, Mr. Berger believes. "It's a different model," he said. "It's not a model that uses money as the primary means of job satisfaction." Charity Navigator's study, [online here](#), includes only charities that received more than 40% of their contributions from individual donors. That criterion excludes nonprofit hospitals, since they derive a majority of revenue from earned income and government funding.



**Barbara Benson**  
Assistant Managing Editor  
(718) 855-3304  
[E-mail Barbara](#)



**Irina Ivanova**  
Contributing reporter  
(212) 210-0266  
[E-mail Irina](#)

**Jonathan LaMantia**  
Contributing reporter  
(212) 210-0702  
[E-mail Jonathan](#)

If you have any comments, please contact [pulse@crainsnewyork.com](mailto:pulse@crainsnewyork.com).

## OhMD bets on patient text messaging

One more doctor-patient messaging app might have a hard time getting noticed in the crowded world of health startups. Just over a year old, OhMD is a secure-messaging platform between doctors and patients that integrates with electronic medical records on the provider's side, but looks like a standard text message to the patient.

The team behind the Manhattan-based OhMD app previously spent years working on hospital patient portals in upstate New York and Vermont, and came to one conclusion: Portals don't get patients engaged.

"When even at really successful institutions the most high-cost systems don't work, you come to the realization that there's a problem with the approach," said Nate Bechtel, one of OhMD's founders.

As meaningful-use deadlines approach, providers will need to prove that their patients are engaging with their health care. Mr. Bechtel thinks patients prefer text messaging to portals.

"As of last month, 97% of providers are failing to meet the [engagement] threshold, and will be penalized \$2 million on average," he said last week at the Blueprint Health Demo Day.

During the semiannual event, OhMD and seven other health startups pitched their ideas to potential clients and investors in downtown Manhattan. OhMD is modeled on the popular messaging app WhatsApp.

Text messages from the patient go to the entire care team and are triaged to the appropriate place, responding to a patient's need for a prescription or, say, a consultation with a nurse. The app has decreased call volume at some hospitals by 30%, Mr. Bechtel said.

OhMD has several New York City hospitals as clients, including Memorial Sloan Kettering, he said.

## At A Glance

**GRANT:** The Institute for Family Health got nearly \$3 million over three years in CDC funding for its work with the Bronx Health REACH Coalition. The award supports the implementation of evidence-based and community-informed interventions that reduce health disparities in the Bronx. The IFH also announced it is launching Towards a Healthier Bronx, an initiative that targets 12 high-need ZIP codes in the South Bronx. The program aims to boost access to healthy food and beverages and opportunities for physical activity.

**REOPENING:** North Central Bronx Hospital holds a ribbon-cutting tomorrow to celebrate the reopening of the hospital's labor and delivery ward, which has been closed for nearly 14 months. If the facility passes a DOH inspection scheduled for this week, it will start accepting patients Oct. 14, according to community advocates.

**STARTUP:** Fit4D, a Manhattan company that manages diabetes medication adherence, was one of three local companies selected yesterday for the [StartUp Health accelerator program](#).