



Wellbridge Addiction Treatment and Research Center in Calverton / Photo courtesy of Wellbridge

## Early opening for Wellbridge addiction center

By: David Winzelberg May 21, 2020

The new Wellbridge Addiction Treatment and Research Center opened in Calverton Monday, which was earlier than its originally scheduled mid-summer opening.

The early opening of the \$90 million, 134,000-square-foot center was a response to the increased number of people facing substance abuse issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a statement from the center.

Wellbridge, a project developed by Garden City-based Engel Burman Group and Northwell Health, has 80 units that can serve a mix of 130 short-term detoxing and longer-term extended care patients, as licensed by the state's Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services. Besides the treatment aspect, the 96-acre facility also focuses on research, compiling data on sleep patterns, nutrition, exercise and various therapies to share with the scientific community to find best practices and advance addiction rehabilitation protocol.

About 21.2 million Americans needed treatment for substance use disorder in 2018, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The agency reported that more than 67,000 Americans died as a result of a drug overdose in 2018.

"With more Americans looking for ways to cope with the mental and emotional stress of the pandemic, there is an increased urgency to provide more access to better treatment," Andrew Drazan, Wellbridge co-founder and CEO, said in the statement. "In recognizing this, we decided to open Wellbridge now. We are implementing a rigorous COVID-19 protection program, created and sanctioned by our partner, Northwell Health."

Northwell Health President and CEO Michael Dowling said the health system is proud to take a leading role in launching the nation's first residential addiction treatment and research center connected to a major academic health system.

"The best way to address the substance use crisis is to bring treatment and research together while also fostering collaboration," Dowling said in the statement. "Partnering with Wellbridge, we believe our investment and community engagement can curtail this epidemic."



Photo courtesy of Wellbridge