

Message to the Community - November 28, 2021

Tom Manion:

Hi, I'm Tom Manion, president and CEO of New London Hospital. Today, I am sitting in our new Express Care clinic with our clinical director, Tom Beauregard, a Physician Assistant and leader of our Express Care who I'm just going to ask a few questions, because I know there's been a lot of buzz in our community about when's this thing opening. And so let me start off with Tom when's that opening?

Tom Beauregard:

The answer is very soon. The long journey is almost done and we have our state inspection later on today. And by the time that you're seeing this video, we could very well be seeing patients. So we are almost there.

Tom Manion:

It's been a long journey. I know we've had things like fire-rated doors on cargo tankers out on the west coast, just waiting to get here and things like that. The supply chain has not been easy on us, but we are close and we're really glad that today hopefully we'll be able to have some news to move forward. So, let's keep having a conversation. Let's get into some specifics about Express Care. What, one of the big questions that I've heard in our community is what's the difference between the Express Care and our traditional emergency room that we already have.

Tom Beauregard:

Okay. The Express Care is here for patients when emerging conditions arise in their life rather unexpectedly, they needed to be seen. The New London Express Care will be here for patients ages two and up for those concerns and conditions. I get asked a lot by patients. When do I come to Express Care? And when do I go to our emergency room? And the answer is, I've often said to them that if you develop a life threatening condition that is chest pain, shortness of breath, severe abdominal pain, uncontrolled bleeding, things that you really fear for your life you're best suited to go to the emergency room. However, if patients arrive here with conditions like that, we are going to be equipped and ready to stabilize them and then transfer them to our traditional emergency room on campus here for folks who have emergent conditions, such as a laceration, they think they broke a bone in their foot, urinary tract infection, embedded tick and possible Lyme disease. Those are great conditions for us to be here for them.

Tom Manion:

So this is a great opportunity to talk about how we are considered in this case, a type-B ER, and one of the benefits that comes with that is that we're able to do that screening and stabilizing and transitioning folks if they need to, they come in here for an emergent situation that really needs a high level of care. Like you just mentioned. Now when that comes to some of the you know, expectations around what people should see in terms of billing for the Express Care, what does that look like? What does that mean from a charging standpoint what people should expect when they get their bills after they had a visit here?

Tom Beauregard:

It's a great question. Charges are typically more expensive than going to your primary care office, but we've set our charges lower than our traditional emergency rooms. So patients can expect to have a cost savings there.

Tom Manion:

So winter is coming. It's going to be, you know, a lot of different situations for people to you know, probably have some issues. What would you say is something you see that makes sense for the Express Care that you'll probably see a lot more of in the days, months, weeks ahead?

Tom Beauregard:

Wintertime tends to really bring out the the slip and falls and people can suffer various injuries from that. They can get knee injuries, very commonly, they fall, and they put their hand out and we call that fall to an outstretched hand where you can, you can break a bone in your wrist, sometimes elbow, abrasions, lacerations, those are all injuries that can happen during the the treacherous times that are upcoming with the the freezing temperatures. And those are conditions that were perfectly set up to handle.

Tom Manion:

And so I'm trying to think, you know, right now for people who live in our area they have our emergency room that's been here. They could go to but then for some of those lower acuity things like you just mentioned you know, they probably drive to places that are urgent cares, you know, either north or south of here. Do you have any things you'd like to mention around what does it look like? Compare what our Express Care looks like compared to other urgent cares in our area.

Tom Beauregard:

Our Express Care has several advantages in my eyes to some of the standalone urgent care centers that are there. I think the biggest thing that I recognize as being in our favor is the association with D-H and being part of the Epic electronic record in that patients who are either in other D-H locations or part of the New London Medical Group, we have access to their chart to see that their medications, their allergies, recent testing that's been done. So the continuity of care is greatly enhanced with that. I think that also being associated in part of the emergency room staff, we have access to their expertise and their help for backup. Our staff spends time in the emergency room, seeing patients and treating them down there. So it's a little bit more integrated.

Tom Manion:

Okay. And so what about things that are better suited for things like primary care? What kind of patients you know, needs, need to be met more so in the primary care space from a chronic long-term conditions versus more acute issues here. And just so we can get that out to the public. So they understand really what this is for, and perhaps not what it's not so much for.

Tom Beauregard:

Yeah. Primary care world is can help with acute issues as well. But soften, there are things that have been work as have been started in the primary care office long-term problems that have been seen multiple times. Those conditions really are best served with the primary care office. However, if there's a new thing that has come up or a change that requires an immediate evaluation, we're here to help.

Tom Manion:

And so another great, another great question that I heard in the community is so, okay. We're still in the throws of COVID. Let's say someone comes here and they think, okay, well, Express Care's here. Can I

just get a COVID test? What does that process look like? How do we make sure we are formally, communicating with people about how to best use Express Care to ensure they're using the best process possible to get a test and know whether or not they're sick with COVID. So,

Tom Beauregard:

And they still have to drive up testing for five days a week, for folks who need just a COVID swab, any patient who comes to Express Care, looking for just a COVID swab, they have to be seen. That's part of the governance under the emergency medicine treatment act. Known as EMTALA, that we have to see them and evaluate them and screen them before we swab them.

Tom Manion:

So last question that I have for you today. So for kids two and up, what makes the most sense, or what would you recommend to parents in, in terms of, you know, working with our current pediatric team before coming into the Express Care to make sure the Express Care is the most appropriate place for them, what, what kind of steps or education would you recommend to them?

Tom Beauregard:

I think good communication between the parent and the pediatrician is great. If you're having a concern where your child's sick or your child's injured, reaching out to the pediatrician first to talk about what steps may be taken is great, and that they'd be, they may very well direct you here, but starting with that, starting with discussion with them first.

Tom Manion:

Great. Perfect, Tom. Thank you very much, Tom. Tom Beauregard our new clinical director of the Express Care here in New London Hospital. We can't wait to get the good news when this place is finally ready to open up. Thank you for all your hard work. It's been a long time coming and we're really excited to get it open. Thank you very much. Thank you.