

Public Advocate Unveils Citizen-Friendly Website

TRENTON — Citizens can find help for specific concerns and information about broad issues affecting New Jersey residents at the Public Advocate's new website, npublicadvocate.gov. The site offers information on the Public Advocate's activities, including updates on efforts to reform the use of eminent domain, safeguard children, senior citizens and people with disabilities and protect voters' rights. New Jersey residents can also seek help online if they have a grievance with another government agency, suspect an elderly person is being abused or neglected in a long-term care facility or need help settling certain disputes. "Every day, the department is working to serve the public interest so it was important that we have a strong

online presence, giving people an easy way to access our information and services," said Public Advocate Ronald Chen. "The new website also allows people to give us their feedback and find help with specific problems they may be experiencing." The site hosts consumer-oriented information, including how to plan for making medical decisions in the event a person becomes incapacitated, how to find help for a mental health problem and a guide to New Jersey beach fees and access. The Department of the Public Advocate was reopened in March 2006. The Public Advocate works to protect the interests of the public, with a special focus on senior citizens, people with mental illness or developmental disabilities, consumers and children.



LOCKS OF LOVE...Ophelia Murray, a second grader at Wilson School in Westfield, shows off her new haircut after donating 11 inches to Locks of Love this summer.

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Westfield, New Jersey
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Overall Scores for Union County Hospitals

NJ Department of Health and Senior Services; Phone: (609) 292-7837

Hospital Name	Heart Attack	Pneumonia	Heart Failure
	Overall Score %	Overall Score %	Overall Score %
State 10% scored equal to or higher than:	98	94	95
State 50% scored equal to or higher than:	94	87	86
Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center	94	92	87
Overlook Hospital	96	87	93
RWJ University Hospital at Rahway	94	84	82
Trinitas Hospital	89	83	63
Union Hospital	95	87	93

First Report on Care in NJ Hospitals Released

TRENTON — The Department of Health and Senior Services has released its first report comparing New Jersey's hospitals on 32 nationally-recognized measures of quality care, Health and Senior Services Commissioner Fred Jacobs, M.D., J.D., announced last Thursday.

"Inpatient Quality Indicators: New Jersey 2005," includes hospital-specific scores as well as statewide and national comparisons. "New Jersey has a long and distinguished history of publicly reporting on the quality of health care in this state," Commissioner Jacobs said. "This latest report gives health professionals, policymakers and consumers one more tool they can use in making important health care decisions."

The report analyzes hospital billing data for more than 1 million New Jersey hospital admissions using quality indicators chosen by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). AHRQ chose the indicators based on the strength of research showing the measure was related to health care quality.

Indicators include inpatient death rates for a variety of medical conditions and surgical procedures, such as heart attack, stroke, heart surgery and hip replacement. There is also data on the numbers of specific procedures each hospital performed, where research shows that performing more procedures is associated with lower death rates.

In addition, the report examines how frequently hospitals perform procedures — such as Cesarean section births or minimally-invasive gall bladder removal — that can be overused, underused or misused. Also included are county level utilization rates for common surgeries such as heart surgery or hysterectomy.

According to the report: New Jersey's statewide risk-adjusted surgical and medical death rates are generally in line with or better than the national average.

In most cases, there was no clear trend across an individual hospital's scores. Most hospitals showed considerable variation, possibly due to data limitations.

A number of hospitals are performing fewer than the recommended number of certain surgical procedures, particularly some high-risk procedures.

Child Advocacy Center Seeks New Donors

ELIZABETH — When Ted Romankow became Union County's prosecutor in the summer of 2002, he vowed to make the protection of children a priority during his tenure.

He inherited a child abuse unit located in a Victorian house in Elizabeth not far from the prosecutor's main office, according to a press release from the prosecutor's office, but the 70-year-old house was in need of repair and too small to handle a caseload that had more than doubled since it was first pressed into service in 1995.

The Union County Child Advocacy Center, run by the prosecutor's office, has provided legal and counseling services to child victims of physical and sexual abuse and their families for more than 25 years, according to the prosecutor's office.

In 1995, the center was purposely separated from the main building of the prosecutor's office to protect the privacy of abused children and their families and to provide them with a more comfortable, home-like environment where they could deal with their trauma and anguish.

When the prosecutor's office moved into the house in 1995, it was reconfigured, rewired and retro-fitted with air conditioning to make it habitable.

Authorities said when CAC relocated to the house in 1995, it handled over 200 referrals of possible child abuse from police, hospitals, DYFS (Division of Youth and Family Services) and schools during its first year in operation. By 2006, that number had grown to over 500 referrals a year.

When he took office, Mr. Romankow increased the number of detectives assigned to the child abuse unit and appointed a new supervisor, Assistant Prosecutor John Esmerado, to handle the growing number of cases. Currently, the unit includes three assistant prosecutors, eight detectives, two clerical

staff and a coordinator. Now, Mr. Romankow seeks to replace the facility he deemed obsolete.

Mr. Romankow said he began working with an architect to create a conceptual drawing of a state-of-the-art Child Advocacy Center, which would include space for the attorneys, detectives and other staff of the prosecutor's office, but would also incorporate space for DYFS workers, an on-site nurse examiner and counselors. The new CAC would also include age-appropriate interview rooms with digital recording capability and a waiting room.

"We would like to be able to provide every service the children and their families need under one roof," he said. "We want to make sure that the victims receive the proper medical, psychological and legal services."

With architect's drawings in hand, Mr. Romankow is now looking for an appropriate location to build — and funding for the project.

"John Esmerado authored a \$500,000 grant request which was awarded to us by the State of New Jersey in April," he said. "That, coupled with the value of the current house, will give us a \$1 million head start. But we'll still need about \$2 million to complete the project."

Local businessman Victor Richel created the Friends of the Child Advocacy Center of Union County, Inc., a non-profit corporation, earlier this year. According to Mr. Richel, he cannot think of any greater goal than "providing a safe non-threatening environment for thousands of children who have been robbed of their childhoods through sexual and physical abuse."

Mr. Richel hopes to raise about \$2.5 million from private sources. "Children are our greatest asset — they must be protected at all cost. What could be more important?" Mr. Romankow said.

get the word out.
 get involved.
goleader.com/organizations



LOOKING FOR NEW HOME...The Union County Prosecutor's Office is for a location to build a new expanded Child Advocacy Center. The current center, above left, is located on Westfield Avenue in Elizabeth. At right are anatomically correct dolls which are used in the child interview process, making it possible for very young children to tell their story.

HIGH SCHOOL EXPO

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Academy of the Holy Angels	X	
Benedictine Academy	X	X
Bergen Catholic High School	X	
Caritas Academy	X	X
Christ the King Preparatory School	X	X
Don Bosco Preparatory High School	X	X
Holy Family Academy	X	X
Hudson Catholic Regional High School	X	X
Immac. Conception High School, Lodi	X	X
Immac. Concept. High School, Montclair	X	X
Lacordaire Academy	X	X
Marist High School	X	X
Maryknoll of the Oranges Academy	X	X
Mother Seton High School	X	X
Mount St. Dominic Academy	X	X
Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child	X	X

	Archdiocesan Center Newark Sept. 19	Archdiocesan Center Newark Oct. 17
Oratory Preparatory School	X	
Paramus Catholic Regional High School	X	
Queen of Peace High School	X	X
Roselle Catholic Regional High School	X	X
Seton Hall Preparatory School	X	X
St. Anthony High School	X	X
St. Benedict's Preparatory School	X	X
St. Dominic Academy	X	
St. Joseph Regional High School	X	X
St. Joseph of the Palisades High School	X	X
St. Mary of the Assumption High School	X	X
St. Mary High School, Jersey City	X	
St. Mary High School, Rutherford	X	
St. Patrick High School	X	X
St. Peter's Preparatory School	X	X
St. Vincent Academy	X	X
Union Catholic Regional High School	X	X

Join Us for a Parkinson's Support Group at Sunrise of Westfield

Are you a caregiver for a loved one managing the effects of Parkinson's disease? Please join us for an open discussion that will provide insight, help and relief. Learn about the care and services that we provide that can help your family.

Sunrise Assisted Living is committed to furthering the knowledge of senior living topics through events and seminars designed to help and inform seniors and their caregivers.

EVENT DETAILS

Parkinson's Support Group
 with Angela Stagarone,
 Parkinson's Foundation

Tuesday, September 18th
 7:00pm

RSVP to 908-317-3030
 Question and answer session
 Light refreshments



Sunrise of Westfield 908-317-3030 Assisted Living, Alzheimer's Care
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