

HEALTH MATTERS

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On a rainy, windy day in 2019, Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital (SBELIH) had a dilemma on its hands.

The Vice President of External Affairs for the Eastern Long Island Hospital Foundation had planned with Stony Brook Medicine a big ribbon cutting ceremony in the parking lot of the Greenport community hospital to celebrate joining the Stony Brook Medicine healthcare system, complete with food, and Stony Brook leaders, public officials and friends. With minutes to come up with a new location for the ribbon cutting – the pouring rain had eliminated any chance of an outdoor spot – a call was made to

Peconic Landing, the Continuing Care Retirement Community located just outside the village. The event was then held in the community's auditorium, and the celebration was saved.

It showed great ingenuity, with the two centers coming together and working in harmony to create something special. Perhaps it's no surprise, then, that the medical staff of Stony Brook Medicine and Peconic Landing collaborated to open The Center for Well-Being at Peconic Landing, an on-site healthcare center for the Lifecare community's members and their neighbors on the North Fork.

Located on a half-mile of private Sound Beach, Peconic Landing works

on a mission of being the retirement community of choice for active adults age 62 and up. The Center for Well-Being, which broke ground in 2021 and opened in 2022, is a huge boon to the community – offering on-site primary, rheumatological and orthopaedic care for its members and the general public by specialists from SBELIH.

"Anytime members don't have to go off-campus for care, it's a huge benefit," said Paul Connor, the Chief Administrative Officer at Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital. "The point is to create local options where there were no local options before, and ensure communities have access to the highest level of healthcare."

Mr. Connor has been involved with Peconic Landing for decades. He's served on the Board of Directors since 2000, and his mother, Barbara Wilson, lived there for 13 years, a move he says extended her life.

Robert J. Syron, the President and CEO of Peconic Landing, says that the hospital's integration with Stony Brook Medicine had a huge impact on both the hospital and the local community.

"It brings greater quality of care to the North Fork of Long Island," said Mr. Syron. "It's a win-win for everybody." Mr. Syron is also part of the Joint Advisory

Committee, a committee that is comprised of senior leadership from Stony Brook, SBELIH and community members, along with Mr. Connor.

Offering on-site care at a residential center for older Americans improves their quality of life immeasurably. Healthcare utilization increases for people as they get older, and can often interfere with quality of life. Before The Center for Well-Being opened, members of Peconic Landing often had to travel to Riverhead or further for healthcare, which could take hours.

Currently, The Center for Well-Being includes Dr. Nathanael Desire, specializing in primary care and geriatric medicine; Dr. Christopher Liedke, offering rheumatological services; and Dr. John Roe, Director of Orthopaedic Surgery at SBELIH, treating orthopaedic issues.

And it's just the start. There are plans for urology and neurology at The Center for Well-Being, with tentative plans for pulmonology, as well.

"We're just scratching the surface," said Mr. Connor.

Visit peconiclanding.org/well-being for more information on the services offered, and elih.stonybrookmedicine.edu for more on Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital.