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ClearChoiceMD plans to open urgent care clinic at Belknap Mall

CLEARCHOICEMD PLANS TO OPEN URGENT CARE CLINIC AT BELKNAP MALL

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BELMONT — ClearChoiceMD has filed an application with the town's Planning Department to open a urgent care facility in the Belknap Mall.

Where's the story?



The independent health care provider proposes to employ two full-time practitioners and five support staff members. If the application for a site plan is approved, the new agency said it will use a state-of-the-art X-ray technology called Image Wisely/Image Gently that measures the dose according to patient size and age.

According to its application, ClearChoiceMD chose the Belknap Mall because of its location in a commercial corridor that provides a convenient location and abundant parking for area residents in need of urgent care.

ClearChoiceMD is a [New Hampshire](#)-based physician-owned and operated urgent care organization that was founded by Dr. Marcus Hampers who is on the clinical staff in the emergency department of the [Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon](#).

The company hopes to open facilities in [New Hampshire](#) and [Vermont](#). A ClearChoiceMD facility opened in [Berlin](#) last week and one is slated to open soon in [St. Albans](#), Vt.

ClearChoiceMD President Michael Porembski said if they get

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approval at the July 28 Planning Board meeting, they hope to open in Belmont in late August or early September.

He said [New Hampshire](#) requires a license submission around 60 days before construction is complete but because it is defined as a physician's practice, the company is exempt from the requirements of a state-issued certificate of need.

Poremski said they typical patient walks in and out of a ClearChoiceMD facility for less than \$200. He said the maximum cost to a self-paying customers is \$250. He also said the agency accepts Medicaid and will be negotiate individual reimbursement rates for the various insurers within the state.

"We are open to everybody," he said.

When asked about people who come to the facility who need immediate emergency care, Poremski said it would be like any other doctor's office — an ambulance would be called.

"It happens all the time," he said. "A patient complains of indigestion but they are having a cardiac emergency. They go to the emergency room."

But, said Poremski, 90-percent of the people who arrive at a doctor's office drove themselves there and 90 percent of those people can drive themselves to the hospital should their needs be beyond those of ClearChoiceMD or any other non-hospital affiliated office.

The application said the according to studies, unnecessary ER visits waste \$14 billion annually and delay critical care to those who need it. The company also said that a recent study in rural [New York](#) showed 44 percent of emergency room visits could have been handled in a physician's office and 70 percent of the emergency room visits from people with employee-sponsored health insurance were unnecessary.

He said the company has reached out to LRGHealthcare, operators of [Lakes Region General Hospital in Laconia](#), about some co-operation with electronic medical records and similar things but said the reception so far has been "lukewarm."

"We gave them some options but as of now they haven't chosen any of them," he said.

A LRGHealthcare spokeswoman said they were aware the application was forthcoming and would be preparing a statement.

LRGHealthcare currently operates a walk-in care clinic called Convenience Care at the Laconia hospital. The clinic is open from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. every day.

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