

Columbia Opens Nurse Practitioner-Led Primary Care in Washington Heights

By [Carolina Pichardo](#) | September 15, 2016 3:30pm
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The Nurse Practitioner Primary Care Group, part of Columbia Doctors, opened a new facility to provide primary care and mental health to a “shortage area when it comes to primary care.” [View Full Caption](#)
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WASHINGTON HEIGHTS — The nurse will see you now.

A medical practice led by nurse practitioners trained at [Columbia University School of Nursing](#) has opened its doors Uptown to provide physical and mental health services to an area known to have a shortage of primary care.

The Nurse Practitioner Primary Care Group, part of Columbia Doctors, opened its facility at 516 W. 168 Street last week, equipped with seven exam rooms, a medical station and three consultation rooms for mental health, said Stephen Ferrara, Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs at Columbia University School of Nursing.

The facility will also offer a multi-purpose room that'll be available to provide health education classes on diabetes, obesity, high-blood pressure and asthma, Ferrara said.

The practice is the second to open under the Columbia University School of Nursing umbrella, officials said. The first practice is in Midtown and there's a third in the works for Morningside Heights later this year.

"We really want a relationship with our patients," Ferrara said.

"We want to put the emphasis on wellness and preventative health and screenings, not be so reactionary to healthcare and only go to a provider when you're sick."

The practice highlights the work unique to nursing practitioners who have completed advanced education and are licensed to provide comprehensive care, according to a Columbia University School of Nursing statement.

In addition to regular care, Ferrara said the center will also act as a liaison between its patients and the healthcare system to help patients get the services they need.

"We know as the affordable care act has come into law, there are populations of people out there that have new insurance and don't know how to work the system," Ferrara said, adding that as part of Columbia Presbyterian's network

the facility can refer patients to a hospital system that is able to "serve and provide for certain services."

There are currently three full-time nurse practitioners and four part-time practitioners. Staffers will be providing services like mental health, travel health, nutrition and wellness, as well as sexual education and health trainings with particular emphasis on outreach to the LGBT community.

The practice is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., with plans to stay open one Saturday a month.