

Maimonides to Expand ER

By Craig McGuire

Construction is expected to begin early this summer on an expanded emergency room and labor and delivery area at Maimonides Medical Center, 4802 10th Avenue.

Maimonides representatives and architects from Manhattan-based Norman Rosenfeld Architects presented their plans at the December meeting of Community Board 12.

Hospital Vice President Derek Goins said while the project has not yet been put out for a bid, Maimonides expects construction to begin in late spring or early summer.

"We've asked our architects to come down and present to the community what will be going on at the site," Goins told the members of CB 12.

For these renovations, the hospital is not required to either hold a public hearing or acquire a variance to begin construction.

"We approached Community Board 12 as a courtesy because we don't want to make anyone feel left out," said Emory Edwards, director of media relations for the hospital.

In October, 1992, Maimonides received a certificate of need for both facilities from the New York State Department of Health, a necessary step for this type of renovation.

Edwards said the hospital planned the expansion because the emergency room, originally designed to accommodate 22,000 patients annually, serves approximately 55,000 patients each year.

"We introduced the project to the community because there has always been concern from the commu-

nity over expanding and enhancing the emergency room," said Edwards.

The project has also been introduced to the Council of Community Organizations, which is comprised of civic groups throughout the area.

The next step is to secure funding. The emergency room expansion will cost approximately \$7 million and the labor and delivery facility about \$6.5 million.

According to Edwards, financing will be generated from fundraisers and a grant from the Federal Housing Administration.

Appropriate Building Promised

Both facilities will be located in a two-story building to be erected on the corner of 49th Street and Fort Hamilton Parkway. The site is currently used as a lot for ambulances.

Architects designed plans for the two-story brick-faced building to match the character of the neighborhood.

Addressing CB 12, architect Jeffrey Kerbeykian said, "By filling in this area located in front of the larger circular Aaron Building, we bring the hospital more into scale with the surrounding neighborhood."

Edwards explained, "The architects designed a building that will blend in with the residential buildings across the street and businesses on Fort Hamilton, and will not be erecting an imposing structure."

The existing 10,800-square-foot emergency room will be expanded by 11,000 square feet. The new emergency room will feature a separate pediatric waiting room and emer-

gency area, improved laboratory and X-ray facilities, expanded health care facilities for women, expanded trauma, cardiac resuscitation and chest pain evaluation capabilities, designated areas for asthma and psychiatric emergencies, and a primary-care treatment area for the rapid disposition of non-emergency patients.

The expanded emergency room will occupy the ground floor below the new labor and delivery area slated for the second floor.

The enhanced labor and delivery area will enlarge the current area from 11,000 to 22,000 square feet.

The new facility will feature four labor and six birthing rooms, enhanced diagnostic and triage facilities to handle labor complications, and enlarged waiting areas.

Goins pointed out that the purpose of the renovations is not to increase the volume of patients the hospital currently handles, but reduce the congestion and decrease the time a patient spends in the emergency room.

"The layout by the architects allows us to efficiently deal with everyone in one area, reducing the congestion that is causing most of our problems," said Goins. "We are expanding our capability by expanding the square footage."

Goins anticipates that construction will last one and a half years.

Aware that there may be concerns over increased traffic congestion in the area, Goins said street closings would only occur when necessary for the employment of heavy machinery, and then only for brief periods of time.