

## **Bellevue Says its Hours are Flexible for Parents**

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By: Julie Shapiro

The World Trade Center clinic at Bellevue Hospital will make every effort to see patients who need care, doctors and the center's leader said last week.

"We are as flexible as we can be when the need is there," said Terry Miles, executive director of the first center in the city to see residents, students and office workers affected by 9/11.

On Feb. 26, Downtown Express reported that two parents had withdrawn their children from the clinic because they could not schedule appointments outside of school hours. Miles said any parents in the program who feel the hours are inconvenient should speak up, and that he would look into the specific cases reported by the Express.

Dr. Niki Kyvelos, the center's pediatrician, said she is available all day on Friday and works with families to schedule appointments outside of school hours. She recently worked on Presidents' Day to give families a convenient time for an appointment.

Every patient's first appointment, which includes a full mental and physical evaluation for children with symptoms believed to be connected to 9/11, lasts several hours, but subsequent appointments are usually shorter. The pediatric appointments often take longer than adult ones because the doctors have to interview both children and parents, together and separately, said Kathryn Kavanaugh, the center's child psychologist.

The pediatric clinic has evaluated 32 children since it opened at the end of 2007, Miles said. They have come from as far away as Arkansas.

Dr. Joan Reibman, the W.T.C. center's medical director, hopes more children come in so the doctors can look for trends in their health. Reibman sees the center not as competition for local pediatricians but more as an opportunity to supplement their care, particularly for children without insurance, children with both mental and physical symptoms and children who are not getting better. Reibman also said she wanted to hear from parents if there are problems so that she can correct them.

One advantage of the Bellevue clinic is that children can receive pulmonary function testing, which can help diagnose breathing problems, Reibman said.