

A Brief History of the Delaware Academy of Medicine at Christiana Hospital

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When Christiana Hospital opened in 1985, there was not much space dedicated to education. Conferences, seminars, and meeting rooms were at a premium. This occurred despite that fact that the Medical Center of Delaware was the only major teaching hospital in Delaware, with many established and respected post-graduate teaching programs and a regular influx of medical students from Jefferson Medical College. Since that day in 1985, the educational mission of (now) Christiana Care has grown steadily (see this column last month). The facilities to support these educational programs has changed little.

Additional building at Christiana Hospital began with the construction of interior steps between the first and second floor, and has since been a regular theme. After those two sets of steps, we've seen the construction and completion of the Medical Arts Pavilion, Surgi-Center, Women's Building, new Emergency Department, Medical Arts Pavilion II, and the current construction of a new front entrance. There have been modest, if any, concessions for educational and conference space in any of these projects. As you know, a cancer center is planned for the near future as well as several smaller construction projects to complement the existing hospital.

The Delaware Academy of Medicine was founded in 1930 by a small nucleus of interested, concerned, community minded physicians. As it evolved, the Academy has focused its energy and resources on three missions: medical education, the maintenance of a library, and financial aid to medical students. As part of its commitment to medical education, the Academy has maintained an auditorium/conference center in its historic building on Lovering Avenue. Over the years, this auditorium has hosted many medical conferences of all sizes and specialties. The medical staffs of the hospitals and the medical societies have held many of their deliberations in this auditorium. Many of the meetings that led to the merger of the three Wilmington hospitals and the establishment of the Wilmington Medical Center, occurred at the Academy of Medicine.

Since the opening of Christiana Hospital, the epicenter of medicine in New Castle County and the focus of medical education has inexorably shifted from the City of Wilmington to the campus at Christiana. A consequence of this has been that the present location of the Academy of Medicine has become increasingly irrelevant to contributing to medical education. The leaders of the Academy have recognized this and also understand that maintaining two libraries, which to a large degree, duplicate expensive books, journals and computer services, may not be in our community's best interest.

With this recognition and understanding, the Board of Directors of the Delaware Academy of Medicine, have approved exploring the feasibility of cooperating with Christiana Care in establishing a conference center and joint library on the campus of Christiana Hospital.

This folks, is genuinely exciting – a facility, on site, where all our medical conferences, seminars and symposia, would be comfortably held. Imagine the efficiency and other benefits this would bring to our practicing physicians, residents and medical students. Imagine a new library,

supported by the joint resources of Christiana Care and the Delaware Academy of Medicine.
Imagine ...

What can you imagine? What do you think? Do you believe that the pursuit of an education/conference center at Christiana should be a priority?

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