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question for people needing to be at the hospital.

The event was the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new hospital, which opened to patients this week. Like the new University Medical Center of Princeton,

Capital Health makes its big splash in Hopewell, but it still has friends in Trenton.

scheduled to open in May of next year on Route 1 at Plainsboro Road, Capital Health seems more like a hotel than a hospital. (The architect, HKS, also designed the Atlantis resort in the Bahamas.)

The walk from the parking lot is softened by waterfalls bubbling cheerfully near the main entrance. Inside (in addition to the 600-plus pieces of original art described in last week's U.S. 1 cover story) are 223 rooms (all singles), two ERs, 10 operating rooms, and the capacity for various high tech procedures that used to be available only in New York or Philadelphia.

At the ribbon cutting the most important speaker may have been Carol J. Galante, assistant secretary for housing from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which has guaranteed the new hospital's \$756 million mortgage. "It's the largest healthcare project HUD has ever insured," noted an appreciative Al Maghazeh, CEO of Capital Health. "When the economic rug was pulled out from under us (by the 2008 Wall Street debacle), HUD stepped in to help."

To me the only unsettling thought was raised by the presence of the Rev. Darrell L. Armstrong, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Trenton, who gave the invocation, and the Shiloh Church choir, which sang a rousing anthem to conclude the event. The Shiloh contingent reminded me of the city that some say Capital Health left behind. When the move to the suburbs was first announced, then-Trenton mayor Doug Palmer said the action

was "a slap in the face."

Maghazeh addressed the hospital's commitment to

Trenton in his remarks. The new building represents the "transformation of an inner city hospital system that accepted more charity cases than all the other Trenton hospitals combined," he said. But it did not abandon its Trenton presence. In fact, the expansion allowed it to invest \$100 million in its former Helene Fuld campus, transforming that into the Capital Health Regional Medical Center, with a trauma center, a Level III neonatal intensive care unit for high risk babies, the regional perinatal center for high risk pregnancies, a stroke and cerebrovascular center, and a neurosurgical intensive care unit.

If you get caught in a vicious car accident on Route 1, or if you are felled by a stroke at your office, you should hope that you end up in Trenton at Capital Health Regional. "Our helipad is now the busiest in the state," said Maghazeh.

After the formal ribbon-cutting, the visitors entered the new hospital and made their way through the lobby, up a staircase past one of the new pieces of art, and toward a reception room. I climbed the stairs immediately behind Marty Johnson, the founder of Isles, the non-profit, Trenton-based organization dedicated to creating better housing and employment opportunities in Trenton. Who better to ask if the new Capital Health center remains an ally of the inner city?

Absolutely, said Johnson, who also now serves on the board of Capital Health (as does Rev. Armstrong). The days of a non-profit taking a lonely stand in the middle of an economically challenged urban neighborhood are over. By moving one part of its operation to the suburbs, Capital Health has positioned itself to serve a broader and more affluent market. Isles, Johnson noted, has done a similar thing by broadening its project list to include activities outside of Trenton.

At the reception I lingered only a few minutes. I saw a few of the doctors I have come to know over the years. Maybe I will see them again in this beautiful setting. I thought to myself, but hopefully not anytime soon.

The last view I had of the Capital Health facilities in downtown Trenton was one that did not inspire me to return. I was flat on my back in an ambulance leaving the Bellevue Avenue facility and heading for Saint Mary Medical Center in bucolic Newtown, Pennsylvania, where I would soon receive a stent to open up a clogged artery discovered at Capital Health.

While I had been to the old Mercer Medical Center on all too many occasions for various operations and procedures, I had always received top-notch treatment, with a minimal amount of waiting time and a maximum amount of care. When I went in for the exploratory angiogram that discovered the 90 percent blocked artery — the widow maker! — and was told I would have to be transported by ambulance to St. Mary Medical Center for an immediate angioplasty to install a stent, I became so unraveled that my cardiologist, the late Abe George, came by to visit. Soon a nurse was assigned to essentially hold my hand during the wait for the first available ambulance.

Nevertheless, the parting image from my worm's eye view was of the chain link fence surrounding the cramped parking lot. It did not make me want to return anytime at all.

A few weeks ago I did go back to Capital Health, this time operating under my own power, driving over to the new campus on Scotch Road in Hopewell, just off I-95, a 15-minute drive (or less) from most offices in the U.S. 1 delivery area. No chain link fence here, but rather spacious lawns and more than adequate parking and even valet parking if walking a few hundred feet from the lot to the main entrance poses a challenge — not out of the