

# GOLDWATER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Goldwater Memorial Hospital opened in 1939 as the Welfare Island Hospital for Chronic Diseases. (This island was then called Welfare.) It is a nursing, chronic care, and rehabilitative facility with 986 beds. Goldwater was designed by Isadore Rosenfield, Butler & Kohn, and York & Sawyer. The hospital covers 9.9 acres, with seven connected buildings, shaped like chevrons to garner river views.



*Goldwater Memorial Hospital, 1999*



*Goldwater Hospital under construction, 1937*

Before the hospital's construction, New York City's Hospitals Commissioner, Dr. S. S. Goldwater (the hospital's eventual namesake), and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses debated intensely on how to use the land throughout the island. Goldwater wanted a hospital park, while Moses wanted public parkland. Since Moses, however, had already opened parks on Randall's and Wards Islands, the scale tipped in Goldwater's favor.

Dr. Goldwater originally planned to build seven modern medical facilities. Only a Nurse's Residence (built in 1938, north of the current subway station) and this hospital materialized, while all other construction was postponed by World War II. After the war the city's priorities shifted to schools, mass transit, and highways. Bird S. Coler Hospital (1952), at the island's northern end, is the only other remaining product of Dr. Goldwater's hospital park plan.

Due to Goldwater Hospital's setting, patient care does not occur solely within the hospital's walls. On nice days, patients scatter along the river promenade, receiving the therapy of shady cherry trees, peacefully flowing water, marvelous Manhattan views, and wholesome socialization.



*The Blackwell's Island Penitentiary was built on this site in 1832. It imprisoned Tammany Hall legend Boss Tweed, for funding himself instead of the city's infrastructure, and actress Mae West, for her indecent role in her '20s Broadway play Sex. By the 1930s, the penitentiary was an infamous site for gang and Mafia racketeering. In 1935 it was torn down and relocated to Riker's Island.*

*To continue the tour, follow the Manhattan-facing seawall north (that is, towards the Queensboro bridge).*