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NEWS

HERALD NEWS

## \$1.1M federal grant to help 'green' Hackensack hospital

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Tuesday, November 18, 2003

By **CAROLYN FEIBEL**  
HERALD NEWS

HACKENSACK - Hackensack University Medical Center will get \$1.1 million in federal funds to help build an environmentally friendly women's and children's medical building, U.S. Sen. Jon Corzine announced Monday.

The grant will help the hospital continue to "green" its facilities, a project spearheaded by Deirdre Imus, wife of radio personality Don Imus and an activist in the fight against childhood cancer.

The new building will be constructed using recycled steel, non-fiberglass insulation, and toxin-free paints and adhesives. Energy-efficient air and lighting systems will eventually pay for themselves in cost savings, Imus said. The \$117 million project, which will be finished in late 2005, will house women's inpatient services and the pediatric medical and cancer programs.

When finished, the Sarkis Gabrellian Women's and Children's Pavilion will be the first completely eco-friendly hospital building in the country, Imus said. Its construction will follow the strict guidelines of the U.S. Green Building Council.

"Obviously you're in here because there's something wrong, and therefore it should be the most pristine environment and the healthiest environment," Imus said after the announcement Monday. "We want to 'green' all the hospitals in New Jersey."

Corzine, D-Hoboken, included the special funding in the 2004 energy and water appropriation bill, expected to be approved this week by Congress. U.S. Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg, D-Cliffside Park, and Rep

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Steve Rothman, D-Fair Lawn, also supported the funding.

"When we're taking care of health in some practical sense, we need to make sure we're not creating other problems ... environmental problems," Corzine said.



Sharon Harrington, a spokeswoman for Lautenberg, said Americans spend 80 percent of their time indoors, where pollutants can be two to five times higher than outdoors. The new building will not only conserve energy but will have furniture and bedding that does not use animal products or contain materials or finishes that can leak toxic fumes over time.

The Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology, based at the Medical Center, is dedicated to finding links between environmental pollutants and cancer. In 2001, Imus created a "greening the cleaning" program to eliminate unsafe chemicals used by maintenance workers at Hackensack University Medical Center and replace them with biodegradable, toxin-free alternatives.

Imus has also helped "green" cleaning programs at the Jacobi Medical Center in New York City, AT&T in Morristown, the Hawthorne Boys and Girls Club and parts of Newark Liberty International Airport. She will discuss the program with staff members at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson next week.

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