



The building under construction



# Emergency Medical Center Takes Shape in Ashdod

The good news is that emergency health facilities for Ashdod are nearing completion. The bad news is that it has taken so long to provide such vital services to this humming port city of 225,000 residents and the 40,000-50,000 people living nearby / Susan de la Fuente

Meanwhile, victims of sudden illnesses or accidents must still travel to Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon, to Kaplan in Rehovot, or to more distant medical centers to obtain treatment. The distance and travel factors are not only inconvenient and expensive but life-threatening in many cases. Since Ashdod is only 25 km north of the Gaza Strip, security threats also loom as a hazard.

The private initiative of Israeli non-profit organization Refuah v'Yeshua (meaning 'healing and deliverance') can be credited for the concrete frame of the five-story building now emerging in southern Ashdod. This organization decided four years ago to erect an emergency room (ER) for evaluation, treatment and 24-hour observation. The Gerer rebbe initiated this project, which aims to seriously curtail suffering and loss of life in Ashdod. A select team of executive planners was enlisted, and well-known dignitaries were coopted as trustees.

With the full cooperation of Mayor Zvi Zilker and the Ashdod municipality, construction has proceeded. August 2008 will see the opening of a ground floor ER and trauma center fronted by an attractive lobby and ambulance bay. This stand-alone ER impressively sized at 1,500 square meters will include medi-

cal, surgical, orthopedic and pediatric facilities and a complete trauma room. On a sober note, a significant portion of this area will be fortified against conventional, biological and chemical attack. The accompanying imaging institute one floor below ground level will contain X-ray equipment, a nuclear camera and the latest in radiological imaging software.

AMC will fully integrate PACS technology into the imaging operation, thus eliminating film-based images and utilizing computer based technology. All AMC physicians will be able to immediately review current and past images at conveniently placed medical workstations.

All patient, diagnostic, medical, administrative and maintenance information will be digitally integrated in the internal computer

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network to ensure that AMC patients receive the best possible treatment attainable.

## Looking to the future

In due course, other departments and clinics will open on higher floors, comprising facilities of approximately 17,000 square meters. The Ashdod Emergency Medical Center (AMC) will include departments of cardiology, preventive medicine, gynecology, pediatrics, mammography, ophthalmology, a pain clinic, a dialysis unit and areas designated for selected surgical procedures. Clinics will be staffed by specialists, with an emphasis on ambulatory treatment and short post-operative stays. With respect to many medical conditions, for example cardiovascular disease, dialysis, cataract and osteoporosis, AMC will provide comprehensive diagnostic through follow up care. The center will operate as an independent non-profit facility, providing technologically advanced medical care to meet community needs.

As far as strategic planning and design is concerned, the medical center is at the forefront. Refuah v'Yeshua's most prominent consultants include Prof. Shaul Shasha. Shasha, nephrologist and award-winning public health specialist, is the medical director responsible for operative planning of the Ashdod site. He is renowned for the achievement of setting up the Western Galilee Hospital in Nahariya, which he directed until 2007.

The design and establishment of the Emergency Room is under the supervision of Dr. Jacob Or, the Director of the Emergency Department at Sheba Medical Center and head of its Mass Casualty Response Team. The Ashdod Emergency Medical Center is supported by donors worldwide who recognize the great need for this life saving project. AMC has made a variety of naming opportunities available to donors, such as room dedications, the purchase of medical equipment or the funding of a specific facility or program. Donors may wish to mark a special occasion or to commemorate the memory of a loved one in this meaningful way. To prevent or alleviate distress and pain is certainly a worthy philanthropic goal, especially as illnesses and accidents transcend all social barriers and impact on us all. For further information, go to [www.ashdodmc.com](http://www.ashdodmc.com). ■