On Campus

Wellness Center to Open in 2017

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Olajide Williams

Two Columbia doctors, the neurologist Olajide Williams ’04PH and the psychiatrist Sidney Hankerson, have been appointed to lead the new community Wellness Center on the first floor of the Jerome L. Greene Science Center, in Manhattanville. Operating with support from Columbia’s Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute, the Wellness Center will open in the coming months. It will provide members of the local community a broad range of health services, including free blood-pressure readings, cholesterol screenings, mental-health treatment, and stroke-prevention training.

Both Williams and Hankerson are known for their pioneering approaches to improving public health in Harlem and Washington Heights. Williams, chief of staff of neurology and associate professor of neurology at CUMC, founded Hip Hop Public

Health, which uses rap music to teach youngsters health tips. Hankerson, an assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at CUMC, founded Mental Health First Aid, a program that works through religious organizations to improve locals' access to mental-health services.

Sidney Hankerson. Photo: Hip Hop Public Health / Eve Vagg

"The Wellness Center is going to be a hub for health in West Harlem," says Hankerson. "We know that people of color — African-Americans and Latinos — are disproportionately affected by chronic medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, anxiety, and stroke. Our goal is to promote education, awareness, and engagement so people can get the help and healing that they need."

Guide to school abbreviations

All categories >