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Medical synergy

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Mergers and acquisitions are terms commonly associated with your pocketbook. But in certain cases, they can also be good for your health.

Unlike the headline-grabbing billion-dollar big-business mergers, a recent merger between two of New York's most revered medical institutions, the Hospital for Joint

NYU Hospitals Center.

According to U.S. News and World Report's annual Best Hospitals rankings, in 2005, HJD was ranked 22nd in the country for orthopedics, and NYU ranked eighth in rehabilitation and 17th in rheumatology.

Under the new partnership, two specific areas are likely to capitalize: clinical treatment and medical research.

On the clinical level,



Diseases and NYU Medical, won't help New Yorkers' financial flexibility. It is however, likely to help those with ailing joints, by advancing treatment in orthopedics, rheumatologic disorders and musculoskeletal diseases.

While HJD and NYU Medical Center and the NYU Medical School have had an affiliation since the mid-1980s, the merger became official just last month, creating the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases.

"The union of these leading medical institutions takes the best practices from each of these institutes, HJD's orthopedics and NYU's Rusk Center, which excels in rehabilitation and rheumatologic treatment and combines them," said Dr. Eric Rackow, president of

subspecialties now under the same umbrella of the joined hospitals will allow patients to obtain "a full continuum of care in a coordinated manner," said Dr. Robin Smith, chairman of the board for the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases.

In terms of education, the new combined program will increase its number of residents' trainees to 60 per year, making it one of the largest orthopedic residency programs in the country.

At a time when the spiraling cost of health care is a perpetual issue, consolidation may prove a wise route for health care institutions.

"Because of the larger purchasing power with multiple institutions," Smith says, "you gain economies of scale."

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