

Employee FAQs related to the proposed affiliation of Hallmark Health System and Partners HealthCare

Q. Is Lawrence Memorial Hospital of Medford (LMH) closing as a result of the affiliation?

A. We do not plan to close the LMH campus. The affiliation calls for up to \$100 million in capital improvements at the LMH campus, to ensure having a robust short-stay hospital, with a host of ambulatory, diagnostic and clinical services to complement 40, or so, short-stay acute care beds that currently comprise the bulk of med-surg activity at LMH. Major renovations to this campus are being planned to transform the hospital into a modern, state-of-the-art facility. There will be a Joint Oversight Committee with representation from Hallmark Health System (HHS) and Partners that will oversee the development of the transition plan and the design and implementation of new programs at the LMH campus.

Q. Will the Urgent Care Center and Emergency Department remain open at LMH?

A. The urgent medical needs of the Greater Medford community will continue to be met through the Urgent Care Center at LMH. The Emergency Department at Lawrence Memorial will remain open at least during the two-year transition of Lawrence Memorial to the short-stay inpatient and ambulatory facility as we evaluate the needs of the community.

Q. Would LMH still be named Lawrence Memorial Hospital?

A. No decisions have been made about naming facilities.

Q. Will services remain the same at Melrose-Wakefield Hospital?

A. Melrose-Wakefield Hospital will remain a full service acute care hospital. Major investments from Partners HealthCare and Hallmark Health will fund renovations so that resources at this campus remain state-of-the-art.

Q. Why is HHS choosing to do this?

A. In short, everything that's being done to affiliate with Partners HealthCare is being done to improve our hospital facilities and healthcare services so that HHS patients will continue to receive the best care possible. Health care delivery continues to change and to move toward more ambulatory, wellness and personal health management support available in the community. The future of HHS in providing those services will be greatly enhanced by our affiliation with a health care system as highly regarded as Partners HealthCare and Massachusetts General Hospital.

Q. Will I have a job; and, if so, how will the affiliation affect where I work?

A. The types of investments that will be made will require that we maintain a robust workforce. While some efficiencies will be gained through normal attrition and consolidation, there likely will be opportunities in clinical areas. Where there are reductions, most of the changes will occur over time and through attrition. As always, we will work with each and every affected employee to support placement in our system. We will also work with those employees who do leave the workforce to support their transition.

Q. Will HHS's facilities be managed under HHS's license?

A. Melrose-Wakefield Hospital will continue to operate under the HHS license. Once the affiliation with Partners is effective, the LMH campus and the outpatient oncology facility will be operated by Mass General Hospital. HHS will be represented on management teams at these two facilities.

Q. Will I be working for Partners HealthCare after the affiliation becomes effective?

A. Staff working at Melrose-Wakefield Hospital will continue to be HHS employees. We are still evaluating whether HHS or MGH will employ the staff at the other facilities.

Q. If I don't want to go to a new work site, would I be eligible for unemployment insurance?

A. An employee could be eligible for unemployment insurance if a new job site is far removed from the original job site. However, the outcome would depend on individual circumstances, and it is premature to predict the circumstances this far ahead for any individual employee.

Q. What about the physicians at LMH? Will they be credentialed by Partners? Will they be in the MGPO?

A. Each inpatient licensed facility will have its own medical staff, and all physicians practicing at a specific facility, whether HHS physicians or MGH physicians, will have to be credentialed to practice at that facility.

Q. Will there be a governing Board of Trustees for HHS?

A. Yes, there will still be a Hallmark Health Board of Trustees that will be responsible for a number of areas, such as budget and personnel matters and credentialing at Melrose-Wakefield Hospital. The Board also will provide community input for HHS's operations.

Q. Will there be a School of Nursing?

A. The details for the future management and operating structure for the School of Nursing have not been determined. Both HHS and Partners HealthCare value the School of Nursing as part of the affiliation.

Q. Is the affiliation really a buy-out of HHS by Partners HealthCare? The press release from Partners said they were acquiring HHS.

A. Legal documents use the term "acquiring", because Partners HealthCare will be the sole corporate member of HHS when the affiliation becomes effective. HHS will be joining Partners as a full Tier One member of the Partners HealthCare System. Other Tier One members include Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Newton-Wellesley Hospital and North Shore Medical Center.

Q. Have there been any adjustments to the timeline for accomplishing the affiliation? It seems like it's taking a long time to accomplish.

A. The legal documents for review of the affiliation have been filed with the federal and state governments. The process may take a year or more. We'll be ready to implement the affiliation when it is cleared by the regulators. Progress in some areas will be immediate once the deal concludes, especially in some service lines, and the full implementation of the plan will develop over a three-to-five year period.

Q. Employees' morale has been suffering during this period of uncertainty about the affiliation. What is management doing to improve employees' morale?

A. Management is committed to working with Hallmark Health employees to help them through this transition and communicate developments to employees on a regular basis as appropriate. As part of this affiliation, Management is working with Partners HealthCare to create the single best healthcare network for community health care. When the affiliation comes together, our communities will have the strongest future imaginable for quality health care in the community. Our physicians, nurses and staff will be working with the highest level of healthcare practitioners in the healthcare industry. We believe patient satisfaction will be driving morale, and being part of this network will be a source of tremendous pride for all of us associated with HHS.

Q. Whom should I contact if I have other questions about the affiliation process?

A. Please direct any other questions about the affiliation process to Alan Macdonald at Extension 3407. Thank you for your continued help and understanding, as we work through this very important transition period.