



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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## **LIFEBRIDGE ACQUISITION OF BON SECOURS IS A WIN FOR WEST BALTIMORE**

*Op-Ed in by Gene Ransom, MedChi CEO*

BALTIMORE, November 19, 2019 — Too often, the news in west Baltimore isn't very positive. For a part of the city that faces myriad challenges, this month marked a major win—a new partnership between Bon Secours and LifeBridge Health. Earlier this month, Bon Secours, Mercy Health, and LifeBridge Health completed LifeBridge Health's acquisition of Bon Secours Hospital. This merger will result in improved health services and an important investment in an area of our city that is deeply in need. At the same time, Bon Secours will continue to its community works program to deliver critical services and housing in west Baltimore.

Countless individuals deserve credit for this achievement; as they say, victory has a thousand fathers. In this case, one leader in particular, Nelson Sabatini, deserves special accolades. He shepherded the project through the complicated regulatory process as Chair of the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC). Chairman Sabatini insisted on a real solution centered on the west Baltimore community. Nelson, a former Maryland health Secretary for two governors, fought back against suggestions that the hospital simply be closed, and resources be moved to other Baltimore area hospitals. Nelson's insistence on a solution that will serve west Baltimore was answered by LifeBridge Health.

Neil Meltzer, CEO of LifeBridge Health, and all the employees of LifeBridge Health should be proud of their mission-driven investment.

Mr. Sabatini believes that the transition of Bon Secours Hospital to LifeBridge Health can improve the quality of life in west Baltimore by transforming the healthcare delivery system, modernizing healthcare facilities, and committing resources aimed at increasing access to needed medical services and addressing social determinants of health.

To summarize the deal, On November 1, all eligible Bon Secours Hospital employees became part of the LifeBridge Health family, and leadership of the west Baltimore hospital transitioned to LifeBridge Health. As Chief Community Health Officer for Bon Secours Mercy Health, Sam Ross, M.D., continues his leadership of community health programs across the ministry of Bon Secours Mercy Health. Bon Secours has worked for years to create sustainable solutions for healthcare for the west Baltimore community; this acquisition is a continuation of discussions and approaches that have taken place for the past decade among health providers as well as local and state officials.

In connection with this acquisition, LifeBridge Health will make annual payments to be paid over six years to Bon Secours Baltimore Foundation and will be used exclusively for the establishment, continuation, or expansion of community-based programming at Bon Secours Community Works and Unity Properties. They will address social determinants of health. The acquisition of the hospital has the support of Governor Larry Hogan, the Health Services Cost Review Commission, MedChi The Maryland State Medical Society, and Baltimore Mayor Jack Young, among countless others.

Bon Secours and LifeBridge Health have been working together to ensure a smooth, stable transition with no disruption of healthcare services. LifeBridge Health's preliminary plans for the hospital include enhanced emergency services, on-site clinical and primary care, expanded specialty services (including pediatrics, ENT, ophthalmology and 3D mammography) as well as a small medical/surgical unit.

To accommodate construction and the addition of new services, some services will relocate to other LifeBridge Health facilities. LifeBridge Health has been working with the Bon Secours Hospital team members on transition preparations, including communicating with employees who are transferring to other LifeBridge Health hospitals, specifically Sinai and Northwest hospitals.

While LifeBridge Health has some initial ideas for the facility, including what services may be added, these plans may be modified as the health system takes over hospital operations and assesses what additional services will best serve the healthcare needs of the community. LifeBridge Health looks to complete renovations and new construction by the end of 2022.

#### About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit [www.medchi.org](http://www.medchi.org).

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