

Lexington Medical Center and Providence Hospitals Reach Significant Agreement



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West Columbia, S.C. – After several months of discussions, Lexington Medical Center and Providence Hospitals are pleased to announce the terms of an agreement that advances both of their efforts to improve health care delivery in the Midlands of South Carolina. Specifically, Providence Hospitals will support Lexington Medical Center's efforts to secure an open heart surgery program and Lexington Medical Center will drop its objections to a proposed expansion at Providence Hospitals Northeast.

Under the terms of this agreement, Providence Hospitals will support Lexington Medical Center in seeking regulatory approval through a joint Certificate of Need (CON) application. Within the application, Lexington Medical Center will request approval for one open heart surgery suite and the authority to perform open heart surgery and therapeutic cardiac catheterizations. If approved by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), Providence Hospitals will de-license one of its open heart surgery suites, allowing Lexington Medical Center to add a suite, in keeping with the 2008-2009 State Health Plan.

Lexington Medical Center has dismissed its lawsuit which opposes Providence Hospitals' plans to expand and improve its existing Northeast facility. Additionally, Lexington Medical Center, upon licensing of the new heart program, would provide \$15 million over a three-year period to Providence Hospitals in consideration of de-licensing one open heart surgery suite. Those

funds will allow Providence Hospitals to reinvest in technologies and equipment for other service lines.

Lexington Medical Center's unique situation as the only hospital located within Lexington County, with one of the state's busiest emergency departments and a busy diagnostic catheterization lab, supports the need for a full service open heart surgery program to perform open heart surgery and therapeutic catheterizations. This agreement will allow Lexington to obtain such a program for the citizens of Lexington County.

Providence Hospitals believes that this joint CON application will not create new capacity in the open heart market, since no new open heart surgery rooms are being added to the service area. In addition, Providence believes that collaborating with LMC on the delivery of health care services and preserving the integrity of the health planning process is in the long term best interests of the Midlands community. While each of the hospitals will continue to be strong health care competitors, they may now also be able to explore additional strategies that would serve to improve patient care.

Providence Hospitals President and CEO George Zara noted the impact of working collaboratively in coming to a resolution on the issue. *"In keeping with our faith-based mission, it is incumbent that we move past these conflicts to focus on our common goals of providing quality patient care."*

Mike Biediger, Lexington Medical Center's president and CEO commented on the joint agreement, *"For years, it has been our priority to make cardiovascular care more accessible to the people of Lexington County. We are now one step closer to achieving that goal. We fully expect that this agreement will allow us to address acute cardiac events in a more timely fashion, ultimately saving more lives."*

According to **Thad Westbrook, chairman of Lexington Medical Center's board of directors**, *"This agreement has been a long time coming and is an important milestone for citizens of Lexington County and the Midlands. The need for a full service open heart program for the people of Lexington County has never been greater, and we now see that our dreams may soon be realized thanks to this agreement with our colleagues at Providence Hospitals."*

Providence Hospitals' board chairman Michael Kapp is optimistic about the understanding the two hospitals have reached. *"I firmly believe that this marks a turning point in the relationship between Providence Hospitals and Lexington Medical Center. We have put aside our differences in order to pursue initiatives that will advance the delivery of quality health care for the people of the Midlands."*

Both Providence Hospitals and Lexington Medical Center appreciate the volunteer assistance of **Mr. Frank Mood, senior vice president & general counsel for SCANA**, during the mediation process.

About Lexington Medical Center

Lexington Medical Center, in West Columbia, S.C., anchors a county-wide health care network that includes six community medical centers throughout Lexington County and employs a staff of 5,100 health care professionals. The network also includes the largest extended care facility in the state, an occupational health center and physician practices. At its heart is the 384-bed state-of-the-art Lexington Medical Center, with a reputation for the highest quality care. Lexington Medical Center was voted one of the "Best Places to Work" by the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, "Best Hospital" by readers of The State for nine years in a row, "Best Hospital" by readers of the Free Times and "Best Place to Have a Baby" by readers of Palmetto Parent. Visit <http://www.lexmed.com> or <http://www.lexmed.tv>.

About Providence Hospitals

Sponsored by the Sisters of Charity Health System, Providence Hospitals was founded by the Sisters of Charity in 1938 and is known statewide for its compassionate care. This non-profit organization is licensed for 304 beds at its downtown and Northeast facilities and employs more than 1,900 caring individuals. Providence Heart & Vascular Institute is recognized nationally as a referral center for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease with several national rankings for quality outcomes including the Society for Thoracic Surgeons and the American Heart Association's Get with the Guidelines Coronary Artery Disease program. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Carolina recently designated Providence Heart & Vascular Institute as a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care, signifying Providence's commitment to quality care, resulting in better overall outcomes for cardiac patients. Learn more at <http://www.providencehospitals.com>.

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