

## **Transition Plan for Grace Medical Center**

### **History**

For over 100 years, the Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours have offered “Good Help to Those in Need” in the West Baltimore community. In 1919, the Sisters established a hospital in Baltimore to provide greater care for the local community. The services provided by the hospital expanded over the years and, by 2018, Bon Secours Hospital Baltimore had become a 69-bed hospital providing emergency care, intensive care, general surgery, primary care, and outpatient dialysis, as well as outpatient primary and secondary care clinics, including endocrinology, cardiology, neurology, orthopedics, podiatry and urology.

### **Acquisition by LifeBridge Health**

In 2018, the Bon Secours Health System (the corporate parent of Bon Secours Hospital Baltimore) merged with Mercy Health of Ohio, creating a combined not-for-profit Catholic health system under the name Bon Secours Mercy Health, Inc. (BSMH). Shortly following the merger, BSMH indicated that it planned to sell Bon Secours Hospital Baltimore and LifeBridge Health was invited to participate in the transaction process. The hospital was facing significant financial hardship and if no transaction partner stepped forward, it would likely be forced to close, cutting off vital services to a community in need.

In considering whether to acquire the hospital, LifeBridge Health determined that certain programs would need to be modified, while clinical services and the physical infrastructure would need to be enhanced in order to assure sustainability of the organization and provision of high-quality services. LifeBridge analyzed the services being provided, the needs of the community and the integrity of the buildings. A comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment was conducted, and LifeBridge Health executive leadership met with community members and asked what services they felt were needed on-site. Through these meetings, LifeBridge learned that the community placed a high priority on pediatric services, women’s health services, and ophthalmology services. LifeBridge’s analysis further showed that having an emergency department, outpatient clinics, outpatient surgical services, and the continuance of outpatient behavioral health services, substance abuse clinics and outpatient dialysis would best serve the current and future needs of the community. It was ultimately determined that critical care (ICU), medical/surgical and inpatient behavioral health services were not sustainable from a quality or cost perspective. However, integrating the hospital into the LifeBridge system could help ameliorate any negative impact of eliminating these services at the hospital, as care could be transitioned to other LifeBridge facilities where appropriate, including Sinai Hospital of Baltimore (“Sinai”) and Northwest Hospital Center (“Northwest”), subsidiaries of LifeBridge located approximately five and twelve miles away from the hospital, respectively.

In addition to potential changes to the services offered by the hospital, LifeBridge inspected its existing facilities and determined that they were in significant need of renovation or

replacement. LifeBridge proposed to construct a new, state-of-the-art facility either on the existing hospital campus or in the immediately surrounding neighborhood. To minimize disruption to the community in desperate need of healthcare services, LifeBridge planned to continue operating the emergency department and offer other streamlined services during the construction of the new site.

On November 1, 2019, LifeBridge Health acquired Bon Secours Hospital. With the acquisition came a new name: Grace Medical Center. At Grace Medical Center, LifeBridge Health continues what Bon Secours started -- focusing efforts on the social determinants of health, and providing healthcare for all, regardless of patients' socio-economic status and ability to pay.

### **Conversion to Freestanding Medical Facility**

In conjunction with the Community Health Needs Assessment and following conversations with community members and local non-profit partners, the decision was made, that as inpatient programs and beds were scaled back, the hospital would be converted into a freestanding medical facility, commonly referred to as an "FMF". Under Maryland law, an FMF is a facility offering medical and health services similar in nature to a hospital. However, the services which may be provided by a freestanding medical facility are narrower in scope than those which may be provided by a hospital. For example, an FMF is only permitted to retain patients overnight for observation. Similarly, an FMF does not provide complex inpatient surgical procedures, labor and delivery, oncology services or critical care. However, unlike an urgent care center that is more limited in services and has defined hours of operation, a freestanding medical facility provides more advanced lifesaving, imaging, and laboratory capabilities, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. FMFs also have staff that include physicians and nurses specifically trained and certified in emergency care. In Maryland, an FMF must be part of an acute care general hospital and must be physically separated from the hospital or hospital grounds. The FMF must also comply with the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) and the Medicare Conditions of Participation.

### **Changes to the Hospital's Physical Plant and Site**

As part of the transition to an FMF, Grace Medical Center will undergo a two-phase renovation process. In Phase I of the project, which is currently underway, the newest building on the existing hospital campus is currently being renovated to create a state-of-the-art emergency department, as well as new surgery and clinic space. The surgery space is expected to be completed by July 2020, while the emergency department and clinic space are expected to be completed by December 2020.

In Phase II of the project, the other buildings on the existing hospital campus will receive environmental remediation and demolition, allowing for the construction of a new 20,000 square foot outpatient behavioral health facility and green space for the community. The new on-site outpatient behavioral health facility will house programs which include a children's day

school (for children 6-10 years old) operated under the supervision psychologists, an adult day program, and an outpatient behavioral health counseling program. The demolition of the existing hospital is expected to be complete in September 2021, while the new outpatient behavioral health facility is expected to be constructed by June 2023.

Please refer to the enclosed slides for additional information and visuals regarding the renovation plans.

### Provision of Acute Care Services

As a freestanding medical facility, Grace Medical Center will continue to provide a range of health and wellness services that are vital to the West Baltimore Community. These services include:

- 24/7 Emergency services
- 24/7 Observation services
- Outpatient dialysis
- Radiology
- Outpatient behavioral health and substance abuse clinics
- Primary care
- Outpatient surgery
- Outpatient Specialty care: pediatrics, OB/GYN, wound care, vascular surgery, orthopedics, ophthalmology, general outpatient surgery, endocrinology, cardiology, gastroenterology, podiatry, urology, neurology
- Diagnostic testing
- 3D Mammography
- Respiratory therapy
- Case management

These services may be modified over time, based on our ongoing evaluation of community health needs as well as feedback from the community.

### *Emergency and Observation*

As an FMF, Grace will continue to provide 24/7 emergency services and observation services but will no longer have inpatient care for medical or surgical cases, intensive care or inpatient behavioral health.

We anticipate 22,000-23,000 visits to the Grace emergency department and observation unit this year. The emergency room will continue to provide comprehensive services, from stabilizing critically ill or injured patients to servicing patients with lower acuity needs. The facility will also provide diagnostic radiology, telemedicine, and social services.

An 8-bed observation unit will be part of the new state-of-the-art emergency department to assist patients who need less than 24 hours of care. Grace will also assist patients needing stabilization of chronic disease and medication management.

The FMF will continue to accept all priority levels from the city and local EMS providers. Grace Medical Center will communicate with LifeBridge Health's virtual hospital for all patients requiring inpatient medical, surgical, critical care or inpatient behavioral health services. Once a patient is stabilized at the FMF, the emergency physician working with the 'medical quarterback' at the virtual hospital will seamlessly transfer the patient to the appropriate level of care using the most appropriate means of medical transportation.

Due to the historical volumes of patients and the fact that certain clinical staff formerly stationed at Grace have been relocated to Sinai and Northwest, Sinai and Northwest are able to absorb patients from Grace. The LifeBridge virtual hospital is staffed by nurses, advance practice providers and physicians who will collaborate with the emergency provider at Grace and facilitate the appropriate transfer of the patient as a direct admission to the appropriate hospital and department for care. LBH has a long-standing partnership with Pulse Medical Transportation and has an ambulance stationed at Grace. The ambulance is equipped and staffed to provide advanced life support.

Beginning on November 1, 2020, patients arriving at Grace Medical Center in need of inpatient behavioral health services will be transferred to Sinai or Northwest's inpatient behavioral health units depending on the level of care needed and the preference of the patient. Patients in need of outpatient behavioral health services will continue to have access to a psychiatry case worker and psychiatry assessment through the Grace Medical Center Outpatient Behavioral health services programs. Currently Sinai and Northwest are working to expand their physical capacity for inpatient behavioral health patients. Sinai's construction will be completed and ready for inpatient behavioral health patients in November, and Northwest shortly thereafter. The current capacity at Grace Medical for inpatient behavioral health patients today is 20.

Grace currently uses the evidence based SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) practice in the emergency department. These services are covered by grants that assist us in treating a large homeless and emergency population that come to the emergency department in crisis. A material number of patients struggle with substance abuse conditions. We are applying for grants to resume offering HIV testing in the emergency room.

Patients access Grace Medical Center's emergency department through city and private ambulance companies, walk-ins, private or public transportation. Grace Medical has agreements with private ambulance companies to transport patients to hospitals in the LifeBridge Health system for those patients who need to be admitted. Grace Medical has

proactively worked with MIEMSS (Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems) to ensure that there are no disruptions and to make sure that communities in west Baltimore are served and patients are brought to Grace Medical Center via 911 calls.

We have had (and will continue) ongoing dialogue with the local EMS providers and state authorities to best serve the needs of our patients and the community. We follow EMTALA laws governing emergency departments.

#### *Outpatient Dialysis*

Other services continuing at Grace Medical Center include the 35-chair outpatient dialysis center that will continue to provide dialysis and nephrology care. Grace Medical currently takes all outpatient dialysis patients regardless of their ability to pay. We assist uninsured patients by helping them sign up for Medicaid. The nephrologists who oversee the program are currently completing over 1,300 treatments per month. The need for dialysis is so great in the community that we are expanding the program to add 6 additional chairs.

#### *Primary Care*

Along with our dialysis program, primary care and specialty care continue on-site and will both be expanded. The current primary care physicians will continue their services and provide those services regardless of a patient's ability to pay. The primary care physicians participate in the Community Health Needs Assessment and assist with the implementation plan as much of the focus has been on obesity, diabetes, chronic disease management and social needs coordination. The primary care clinic will also include certain pediatric services.

#### *Specialty Services*

In partnership with primary care, Grace Medical Center will continue endocrinology services to address diabetes and metabolic conditions and a licensed diabetes educator will provide services around diabetes education. Additional specialty services will be embedded with primary care. Other specialties we are planning include vascular surgery, as well as orthopedics, podiatry, urology, neurology, ophthalmology, wound care, general outpatient surgical services, gastroenterology, and cardiology. Those services are delivered in the clinic setting as well as emergency and outpatient settings.

#### *Outpatient Surgery*

Grace Medical Center will include two surgical suites for outpatient surgeries and procedures. Procedures such as wound debridement, abscess drainage and outpatient orthoscopic and endoscopic procedures will be offered.

#### Plan for Job Retraining and Placement of Grace Medical Center Employees

Since the acquisition of Grace Medical Center, LifeBridge Health has been proactively working with the employees in the areas of critical care and medical surgical care to find new jobs within the LifeBridge Health System. We believe that our alignment with Grace will be of great benefit to the community, as well as the employees of Grace. A benefit to joining the Lifebridge Health system is access to greater opportunity for employment, as well as opportunity for career growth. Prior to November 1, 2019, the legacy Bon Secours human resource department working alongside LifeBridge Health human resources and clinical leaders held career fairs for both Sinai and Northwest. Employees who worked in critical care areas and medical surgical areas were invited to the career fair and visited critical care and medical surgical areas in Sinai and Northwest. Employees were invited to shadow clinical peers in departments of their choosing. Since November 1, 2019, 44 clinical staff have successfully transferred to Sinai or Northwest.

In advance of the relocation of inpatient behavioral health services from Grace to Sinai and Northwest, we will undertake the same exercise with the Grace behavioral health staff. LifeBridge Health human resources and clinical leadership are proactively identifying open positions across the health system for employees impacted by the new scope of Grace Medical Center. The multi-disciplinary team made up of human resources and clinical leadership has worked hard to provide clear and regular communications via management councils, town halls and printed materials. On a bi-weekly basis the team meets to discuss openings in the broader system and provide cross training opportunities.

Over the past year, the LifeBridge Health team has also worked to build meaningful relationships within the west Baltimore community -- one area of focus in this community development has been potential job placement. The LifeBridge team has participated in several community meetings with Bon Secours Community Works, Fayette Street Outreach, Boyd-Booth neighborhood association, and Southwest Partnership, updating groups on the progress of the acquisition, the future of Grace Medical and opportunities for employees. It is a privilege to come together with Grace to meet the needs of the community and further the mission of providing exceptional health and wellness services to those in need.