

Mountain States Health Alliance announces affiliation with Vanderbilt University Medical Center

By KEVIN CASTLE | BRISTOL HERALD COURIER | Posted: Friday, May 3, 2013 11:45 am

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn. — Mountain States Health Alliance’s network of hospitals across Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia will have access to more physicians, specialized care consultations and clinical research with an agreement announced Friday with Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

MSHA president and CEO Dennis Vonderfecht said the process to find their partner in Vanderbilt took three years and was done to meet the changing landscape of the health care market and reform, creating a collective of 42 hospitals that can share information while keeping patients in near their home.

Mountain States Health Alliance includes 13 hospitals, serving 29 counties in Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky and North Carolina.

“We come at this from strength. We do not come at this from weakness. We believe the citizens of Middle Tennessee, East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia will, along with physician staffs from all of our institutions will benefit greatly from the opportunities we are going to create,” Vanderbilt Health System CEO Dr. Wright Pinson said.

Dr. Morris Seligman, MSHA Chief Medical Officer, said the affiliation lets their doctors, nurses and other care providers inherit a vast amount of care plans that can help in different settings like in and outpatient procedures and help in the recruiting process for physicians in specialty areas.

“We see this affiliation with Vanderbilt to help provide clinical expertise for some of our clinical service lines such as cardiovascular and oncology. Given Vanderbilt’s extensive and



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Dr. Wright Pinson, deputy vice chancellor for Health Affairs for Vanderbilt University, left, and Mountain States Health Alliance CEO Dennis Vonderfecht, right, discuss Friday's announcement of a strategic affiliation agreement reached between the health systems.

internationally renowned research programs that will be able to help us advance our research activities,” Seligman said.

Vanderbilt’s Nashville facilities were ranked within the top 40 hospitals in the country in the 2012 U.S. News and World Report’s list of national health care providers in the areas of care for cancer, diabetes, cardiology, orthopedics and nephrology, according to the publication.

There are no financial obligations tied to this partnership, Vonderfecht said, with a joint steering committee with three individuals from each health system that will confer on issues, health care spending and exploring educational and other associated opportunities that come with this merger.

“...In putting this affiliation together, we have gained all the advantages of a large health system but we have not given up any local control,” Pinson said.

Pinson also said the combination of facilities and physicians also helps in providing cost-effective health care.

“We have to get some economies of scale, we have to put in some standardized processes and we have to share innovation among providers. That’s how were going to lower the costs. We are not interested in moving patients to Nashville, per se. We are completely focused on building up the quality of care, bringing in physicians as needed and providing programs locally. The care at home is being improved through this new system,” he said.

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