

St. Joseph sale to University of Maryland Medical System expected Dec. 1

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St. Joseph Medical Center in Towson is anticipating a Dec. 1 sale to University of Maryland Medical System, UMMS announced Nov. 14.

UMMS and St. Joseph's parent company, Catholic Health Initiatives, have been working toward a final sale since announcing their plans in March.

Because Dec. 1 is a Saturday, the sale could take place Nov. 30, Mary Lynn Carver, UMMS senior vice president for communications and public affairs, told the Catholic Review.

The Catholic Review reported in August that the Archdiocese of Baltimore must approve St. Joseph's sale to UMMS, Maryland's largest hospital system. Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori has not commented publicly on the sale.

No statement has been made as to how St. Joseph's sale from a Catholic health system to a non-Catholic health system will affect its Catholic identity.

However, UMMS is hopeful that St. Joseph will remain a Catholic hospital, Carver said.

"The parties' mutual goal is for St. Joseph hospital's religious mission to remain intact," Carver said. "University of Maryland Medical System has been working with the archdiocese, and we anticipate an announcement on those matters shortly."

According to an archdiocesan spokesman, the archdiocese is discussions with UMMS and also hopes to make an announcement soon.

UMMS also announced the formation of a new organization, the University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center, LLC. St. Joseph employees began to receive notification Nov. 14 regarding the transfer of their employment to UMMS or the newly formed organization. All St. Joseph employees are expected to be retained, with most transferring to the new organization, Carver said.

Former Maryland state senator Francis Kelly has been appointed chairman of the board for the University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center. Kelly was instrumental in the creation of UMMS and has served in numerous leadership roles for the health system. Edward Gilliss, current St. Joseph Medical Center board chairman, will serve as the organization's vice chairman.

According to UMMS, regulatory filings related to the sale are awaiting approval by the Federal Trade Commission and other regulatory authorities.

"December 1 will be here very shortly, and we're excited to be moving forward with all these necessary steps to make the acquisition a reality," Carver said. "We're very excited to be welcoming the St. Joseph employees into the UMMS family. They are (a) very quality institution, have wonderful doctors and employees, and they fit very well with the culture and community of the University of Maryland Medical System."

A St. Joseph spokesperson declined to comment on the sale.

Until the sale is final, the Denver-based Catholic Health Initiatives will continue to operate St. Joseph. St. Joseph is the first hospital to leave Catholic Health Initiatives to join a non-Catholic health system, according to a CHI spokesperson.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia began St. Joseph in 1864 in Baltimore. The hospital moved to Towson in 1965.