

News Release

Newman Regional Health, The University of Kansas Health System, and LMH Health Announce Strategic Affiliation

Emporia, KS – January 29, 2025 – Newman Regional Health (NRH), The University of Kansas Health System, and LMH Health are excited to announce a strategic affiliation, effective February 1, 2025. This affiliation is designed to strengthen the healthcare services available to our community and ensure continued high-quality care for years to come.

The NRH Board of Trustees approved the affiliation during its meeting on January 29, 2025. NRH's Board Chair, Nancy Wells, expressed her enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, "We are grateful to align with the esteemed organizations: The University of Kansas Health System and LMH Health. This affiliation will pave a new road for healthcare that will allow us to better serve our community while strengthening our position for the future. "

Cathy Pimple, CEO of NRH, emphasized the collaborative nature of the decision, saying, "This intentional decision reflects our strong commitment to partnership. From the start, our discussions with the leadership of The University of Kansas Health System and LMH Health have been open and aligned—an approach we deeply value in a future partner. This strategic affiliation is grounded in key principles, including Newman Regional Health maintaining independent ownership and governance and remaining dedicated to our charitable mission as we continue to serve our community."

The University of Kansas Health System expressed enthusiasm for the strategic affiliation with Newman Regional Health. "As a resource for the region and the state's only academic health system, we are pleased to work with NRH to help ensure care close to home," said Bob Page, President and CEO of The University of Kansas Health System. "We look forward to continued collaboration with NRH and LMH Health to create connections to support care needs from routine to the most complex."

"Our regional efforts have been focused on helping independent hospitals remain strong in their local communities," said LMH Health President and CEO Russ Johnson. "LMH Health's long history of collaboration with Newman Regional through OrthoKansas is a great example of how an expanded affiliation can benefit patients. Much like LMH Health's strategic clinical agreement with The University of Kansas Health System, this new agreement will support delivery of care close to home and allow for streamlined coordination when patients require care outside of Emporia. Most importantly, this affiliation supports independence, allowing healthcare decisions to be made closest to home, for the benefit of our patients, physicians, and communities we serve."

This strategic affiliation marks the beginning of a shared commitment between Newman Regional Health, The University of Kansas Health System and LMH Health, to continue fulfilling each organization's mission while honoring their individual roles within their communities. The affiliation is an integral part of NRH's ongoing strategic planning, which focuses on enhancing patient quality and experience, expanding services, and improving the health of the community.

Heather Aylward, Chief Nursing Officer stated, "Newman Regional Health has deep roots in Lyon County. Over the past 100 years, we have come together as a community, and we are moving forward with partners who share our vision. These organizations bring complementary strengths that will enhance and support healthcare for the communities we serve."

Don Hill, Newman Regional Health Trustee, shared his enthusiasm for the hospital's future, stating, "I could not be more pleased for the future of our independent, community owned hospital. This past year was an exceptional record-breaking year with clear improvement in clinical excellence and growth in volume. Our strategic affiliation agreement with The University of Kansas Health System and LMH Health represents both a continuation of planning and progress made, including our very successful collaboration with LMH Health in expanding our orthopedics and sports medicine services. The benefits of the affiliation are significant. It will assist in our quest for continuously improving quality of care and contributes to making NRH more financially sustainable. Our future is bright!"

Dr. Alana Longwell, NRH's Chief Medical Officer, highlighted the collaborative approach to alignment with The University of Kansas Health System and LMH Health, saying, "We are excited about the opportunity to align clinical programs where it benefits our patients most. This affiliation builds on the work NRH providers have already done to create greater access and improve quality of care."

Dr. Ryan LaSota, a primary care physician at NRH Medical Partners, shared his anticipation for the possibilities this partnership will bring: "It will enhance our availability to advanced resources and specialized expertise, directly benefiting our patients. This collaboration allows access to the forefront of healthcare innovation while continuing to provide the highest quality care to our community."

Pimple added, "This week's announcement marks the first step in an exciting journey. We are optimistic about the opportunities ahead and the positive impact they will have on our patients and communities. The strategic affiliation will allow us to leverage our combined strengths to improve the health and well-being of our community in a meaningful and impactful way."

NRH, The University of Kansas Health System, and LMH Health will continue to meet regularly to align on areas of collaboration. Pimple concluded, "These ongoing discussions will help us ensure the delivery of high-quality care while enhancing the continuum of services, all with the ultimate goal of keeping care close to home for our patients."

Rebeca Herrera, Vice Chair of the NRH Board of Trustees, reaffirmed the hospital's commitment to transparency. "We are committed to keeping our providers, staff, patients, and community informed as we move forward with this strategic affiliation. We are confident that now is the right time for this partnership, and we enter this process from a position of strength."

About Newman Regional Health

Newman Regional Health is a not-for-profit Hospital owned by the citizens of Lyon County, Kansas. Recognized as a Level IV Trauma Center, Newman Regional Health provides inpatient acute and medical rehabilitation services along with a full range of emergency and outpatient care to patients of all ages in Lyon County and surrounding areas in East Central Kansas. With a mission to improve health in the community by providing high quality care and a vision to be a valued, trusted partner and regional provider of exemplary services, Newman Regional Health receives recognition as a top Critical Access Hospital each year.

About LMH Health

LMH Health's purpose is to be a partner for lifelong health. LMH was founded more than 100 years ago on the principle that everyone is entitled to high-quality healthcare. The health system includes a 174-bed not-for-profit hospital with the latest diagnostic and surgical technology, the new LMH Health West Campus facility, and 28 primary and specialty care clinics. Supported by more than 1,800 staff and 380 providers, LMH is dedicated to the health and wellness of our communities, and it shows in our physician expertise, innovative care, and high standards of clinical excellence. LMH regularly earns national and regional honors for high-quality service, including accreditation from the Commission on Cancer, the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers, and the American College of Cardiology. The Joint Commission recognized LMH Health with Advanced Certification for Primary Stroke Center, and it is one of only two health systems in Kansas to receive Advanced Certification for Total Hip and Knee Replacement.

About The University of Kansas Health System

The University of Kansas Health System is the region's premier academic health system, providing a full range of care. It includes The University of Kansas Physicians, the region's largest multispecialty physician group. The health system is affiliated with the University of Kansas Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions and their leading-edge research projects. In the Kansas City metro area, the health system offers more than 150 hospital and clinic locations, including its flagship hospital in Kansas City, Kansas, a hospital at Indian Creek Campus in Overland Park, hospitals in Liberty, Olathe, and Miami County, and two mental and behavioral health hospitals in the Kansas City area. The health system in Kansas City has received Magnet nursing designation four times in a row for the highest level of care and has ranked by U.S. News & World Report's as the Best Hospital in Kansas City for 15 years, and 13 years in Kansas. It provides the region's most experienced, nationally verified burn center and Level I Trauma Center, as well as a leading transplant program in liver, pancreas, kidney, heart, and blood and marrow. The cancer program is part of The University of Kansas Cancer Center, one of 56 National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer centers. In addition to Kansas City metro locations, the health system has locations in Great Bend and Topeka. It receives no state or local appropriations, instead relying on operating revenue, bonding authority, and philanthropy.

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