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Northampton nursing home now part of large regional network

By Patti Borda Mullins pmullins@newspost.com Jan 1, 2016

The Northampton Manor Health Care Center on East 16th Street in Frederick has become part of a regional network of skilled nursing-home centers led by Mid-Atlantic Health Care LLC, which is based in Timonium.

Late last month, Mid-Atlantic announced the purchase of Northampton and three other locations in order to establish a foothold in all of Maryland's major communities, said Dr. Scott Rifkin, chief executive officer.

As of now, Mid-Atlantic Health Care owns and operates Northampton, Devlin Manor Health Care Center in Cumberland, Julia Manor Health Care Center in Hagerstown and Moran Manor Health Care Center in Westernport.

Rifkin, a co-founder of Mid-Atlantic Health Care, said Thursday no changes are planned right away at Northampton. First, his company will observe the 196-bed nursing and rehabilitation home at work for at least a few weeks, he said.

"We want to go in and learn," Rifkin said. "Typically, what we do, when we invest in the properties, we upgrade the physical plant."

He did not predict any staffing changes that would affect the 210 to 220 employees, and said that adding employees rather than reducing would be more likely, if changes are made.

Along with Mid-Atlantic's other facilities in Oakland and Cumberland, the company will operate 21 centers in Maryland and Pennsylvania, and become one of the region's largest employers.

The chain of nursing homes, like hospitals more generally, has been working in recent years to meet standards set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for readmission of patients back into facilities for problems for which they were first admitted.

CMS, a division of the federal Department of Health and Human Services, expects that patients who leave a hospital not be readmitted for related medical issues in the months after their discharge.

"CMS is right," Rifkin said. "When care is coordinated well, ... patients do better, and they stay out of the hospital; that is a clear understanding of everybody in health care these days."

His company developed a data analysis technology that he credits for reducing readmission rates by 50 percent. The technology earned Mid-Atlantic an award from the long-term care trade publication, McKnight's.

"What we're trying to do is prevent those readmissions while they're under our care," he said.

Mid-Atlantic plans to work with medical facilities such as Frederick Memorial Healthcare and its partners in the Trivergent Health Alliance, to meet or exceed Medicare expectations for patient care and hospital readmission rates, Rifkin said. Frederick Regional Health System, Meritus Health and Western Maryland Health System are part of the Trivergent Health Alliance.

The four facilities that Mid-Atlantic bought belonged to the Magnolia Group, a skilled nursing facility owner-operator and provider of rehabilitation services in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Magnolia will continue to provide rehabilitation services at the centers through its affiliated Magnolia Rehabilitation Services, LLC.

Rifkin said he regards Northampton as both an important employer in the community and a link in community health care.

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Mid-Atlantic Health Care

- Founded in 2003 by Dr. Scott Rifkin and Howard Friner
- 21 facilities in Maryland and Pennsylvania
- Details online: mahchealth.com

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-- Dr. Scott Rifkin, Mid-Atlantic Health Care CEO