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**Essentia Health and CommonSpirit Health sign Letter of Intent**

***Negotiations move forward regarding opportunity for CHI facilities in North Dakota and Minnesota to join Essentia Health***

Essentia Health and CommonSpirit Health have signed a Letter of Intent for CommonSpirit-owned facilities operating under the CHI brand in North Dakota and Minnesota to join Essentia Health. This includes CHI St. Alexius Medical Center in Bismarck, a full-service tertiary hospital and 13 critical access hospitals, along with associated clinics and living communities currently operated by CommonSpirit and CHI Health at Home home health and hospice agencies.

Leaders from Essentia and CommonSpirit look forward to continuing their strategic discussions, building on their mutually held commitment to the health and vitality of this region.

“This is an exciting opportunity to extend our passion for excellence in rural health care to additional communities,” says Essentia CEO David C. Herman, MD. “We’re grateful that our shared Benedictine heritage and values form a strong foundation for our ongoing discussions. It would be an honor to carry on the rich tradition of high-quality Catholic health care evident today in these CHI facilities.”

“CommonSpirit wants patients in this region to have access to a strong network of rural and tertiary hospitals, primary and specialty care, and telehealth services,” said Cliff Robertson, MD, senior vice president for CommonSpirit’s Midwest division. “Essentia Health is well-positioned to integrate these facilities into a continuum of care, while carrying on the Catholic heritage and mission of these facilities. We look forward to continuing our conversations.”

Both organizations recognize the important role that health care plays in keeping rural communities vibrant. This shared understanding will help ensure the long-term success of these facilities should an agreement move forward. Essentia has a proven track record of providing access to comprehensive, integrated care in rural communities across North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin. CommonSpirit, which was formed when Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) combined with Dignity Health in 2019, also operates facilities in Iowa, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

Signing a Letter of Intent is the first step in the process of reaching a formal agreement to transfer ownership of these facilities. It is the hope of both organizations that the due diligence process moves forward smoothly, and the CHI facilities could join Essentia by summer 2021.

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**About Essentia Health**

Essentia Health is an integrated health system serving patients in Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota. Headquartered in Duluth, Minnesota, Essentia Health combines the strengths and talents of 13,800 employees, including more than 2,100 physicians and advanced practitioners, who serve our patients and communities through the mission of being called to make a healthy difference in people’s lives.

Essentia Health, which includes many Catholic facilities, is guided by the values of Quality, Hospitality, Respect, Joy, Justice, Stewardship and Teamwork. The organization lives out its mission by having a patient-centered focus at 14 hospitals, 71 clinics, six long-term care facilities, three assisted living facilities, three independent living facilities, five ambulance services and one research institute. Essentia Health is accredited as an Accountable Care Organization by the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

**About CommonSpirit Health**

CommonSpirit Health is a nonprofit, Catholic health system dedicated to advancing health for all people. It was created in February 2019 by Catholic Health Initiatives and Dignity Health. With its national office in Chicago and a team of approximately 150,000 employees and 25,000 physicians and advanced practice clinicians, CommonSpirit operates 139 hospitals and more than 1000 care sites across 21 states. In FY 2020, CommonSpirit had combined revenues of nearly $29.6 billion and provided $4.6 billion in charity care, community benefit, and unreimbursed government programs. Learn more at [www.commonspirit.org](http://www.commonspirit.org/).