

# Jefferson

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University. This will increase opportunities for learners to receive clinical training, patients to participate in clinical research within the network, and provide more choice for health plan beneficiaries. Upon closing, the combined system would operate 30 hospitals and more than 700 sites of care, supported by more than 62,000 employed faculty, clinicians and staff.

"The healthcare landscape and our communities' needs are changing; it is critical leading systems evolve and make investments in the future of care and wellness—growing and protecting access to enhanced, affordable, high-quality and innovative care, particularly for historically under-served patients," said Joseph G. Cacchione, MD, Chief Executive Officer, Jefferson. "Combining Jefferson's and LVHN's resources will allow us to meet the changing needs of our diverse communities faster, more efficiently and more effectively. Together—with our combined network of resources and sites of care, managed care expertise, education and research capabilities—we will have the ability to make significant improvements to health outcomes and address health disparities in this region, and beyond, to the benefit our communities, patients, physicians, faculty, staff, students and health plan members."

"We are thrilled to be combining with Jefferson and excited about the immediate and long-term benefits this combination will create for the communities of the Lehigh Valley and Eastern Pennsylvania," said Brian A. Nester, DO, MBA, MS, FACOEP, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lehigh Valley Health Network. "In Jefferson, we have found an ideal partner that shares our culture and commitment to excellence in clinical care and a learning environment, and that has done a fabulous job in establishing a highly successful health plan with a sharp focus on the well-being of Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries. The expertise derived from these operations is becoming a crucial competency for health systems to deliver on their mission, and Jefferson Health Plans will help drive improvements in health outcomes, especially in vulnerable populations. We are also very excited about the opportunity to expand academic and talent development programs that will further bolster our provider pipeline and enhance our ability to attract and retain top talent to the benefit of the communities we both serve."

## Combination benefits would include:

A quality-focused care delivery model with the ability to expertly manage population health and reduce cost of care.

A wide-ranging care footprint, with 700+ sites of care across eastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey, including hospital, ambulatory and post-acute services, as well as a robust primary care base for preventive care.

Distinctive clinical services lines that meet patient needs and address health disparities, including strengths in primary care—particularly for patients who have historically faced barriers to high-quality specialty care such as oncology, neurology, orthopedics, cardiovascular and solid organ transplant.

Expansion of academic programs, and clinical research bolstered by clinical service lines.

A leading health plan that would strengthen patient choice within the LVHN service area, specifically focused on vulnerable and at-risk populations covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

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Sustainable cash flow and improved financial stability, enabling the combined organization to continue investing in innovative treatment capabilities and R&D.

The parties expect to sign a definitive agreement and close the transaction in 2024, pending completion of all necessary regulatory reviews and closing conditions. Both Jefferson and LVHN will continue to operate as separate, independent entities until the combination closes. The parties are committed to ensuring the patients and communities they serve continue to have access to exceptional care from their providers during completion of this process.

Upon the closing of the transaction, Jefferson's Cacchione will continue to serve as Chief Executive Officer of the Jefferson Enterprise. LVHN's Nester will serve as Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer and President of the legacy Lehigh Valley Health Network, reporting directly to Dr. Cacchione. Dr. Baligh R. Yehia will serve as Executive Vice President/Chief Transformation Officer and President of the legacy Jefferson Health, while continuing to report directly to Dr. Cacchione. The newly integrated Board of Trustees and leadership team will be comprised of members from both systems. The specifics will be worked out in the definitive agreement.



## Celebrating First Day Hikes Across the Corridor

By Gianna Caruso

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY - Start the new year in nature with a First Day Hike near you.

First Day Hikes are part of a nationwide initiative led by America's State Parks to encourage people to get outdoors. As part of that initiative, knowledgeable state park staff and volunteers will lead hundreds of free, guided hikes across the United States.

The five-county Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor is home to 12 state parks, each of which feature beautiful natural resources in our region.

Below we've gathered information on the seven hikes PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) employees and park volunteers will lead across the Corridor on Jan. 1st. Register for one today or use the additional resources provided to plan your own adventure. Tag us from the trails at @DelawareandLehigh on Facebook or @DLNHC on Instagram!