



## Capella/MUSC Health Era Begins at KH

Corporate officers, local VIPs, employees brave rain for celebration

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The sign atop KershawHealth said it all: "In affiliation with MUSC Health."



As of Sunday, the public hospital became part of a for-profit network jointly owned by MUSC Health, the patient care arm of the Medical University of South Carolina, and Capella Healthcare of Franklin, Tenn. To date, the only other hospital in the network is Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center in Hartsville.

In a deal which closed Friday, Capella paid \$35 million to purchase most of KershawHealth's assets, lease its main campus and Elgin outpatient/urgent care facility and collaboratively operate the hospital with MUSC Health.

KershawHealth CEO Terry Gunn said the public will not see Capella's name on any signage.

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"They are humble," Gunn said during a special celebration outside the main entrance to KershawHealth on Monday, "but they are also the glue holding all this together."

About 75 people braved incessant rain to see the new signage marking KershawHealth's new status within the Capella-MUSC Health Network and to hear remarks from KershawHealth, Capella and MUSC Health officials.

Derial Ogburn, chairman of the Health Services District of Kershaw County Board of Trustees -- which up until Friday was the KershawHealth Board of Trustees -- credited former Kershaw County Council Chairman Gene Wise with inspiring the board to seek out partners such as Capella and MUSC Health.

"(He) admonished us, as trustees, to do our jobs: to get out there and see what we had, see what challenges we had ahead of us, and devise a plan to continue to provide healthcare to this community for years and years to come," Ogburn said. "That's when our board came together and began to develop a strategic plan and that's why we're here today."

Ogburn also thanked Kershaw County Council, the county's legislative delegation, hospital attorneys from Parker Poe and hospital CPA firm Sheheen Hancock & Godwin for their assistance.

"And, of course, the staff here at KershawHealth. We are excited about the future for healthcare. These are great partners that we have coming to our community and we're excited about what they're going to do, the changes they're going to make and the improvements they're going to make in years to come," Ogburn said.

Past KershawHealth board Vice Chair Dr. Tallulah Holmstrom said her reasons for being excited about KershawHealth's future go back 50 years.

"Fifty years ago, my mom and dad came to this hospital hoping to have a quality experience when they delivered their sixth child," Holmstrom said. "Sixteen years ago, I came to this hospital hoping to have a quality experience when I delivered my own child. Twenty minutes ago, as I was caring for a patient, I was hoping to have a quality staff and quality experience, to make sure that the patient that I'm caring for received the absolute best quality care that they could have."

Holmstrom said when the board of trustees began looking for a strategic partner, she knew she and the board wanted -- "and what you, the citizens of Kershaw County deserved" -- was a company "absolutely committed" to quality. She said she has "absolutely no doubt" the Capella-MUSC partnership will elevate the level of quality and perpetuate the delivery of quality healthcare to Kershaw County.

Capella Mike Wiechart said his company "is honored" to be MUSC Health and KershawHealth's partner in navigating the hospital's future.



“Today represents the last step of what I view as the first part of our journey together,” Wiechart said. “I’m reminded of the, at times, difficult decisions that had to be made, and I’m also reminded of the many shared sacrifices that have been made along the way. But what I remember most, and that for which I’m most excited and appreciative about, is that, through it all, the hard work, the difficult choices and the shared sacrifices, we have done this together.”

Wiechart said the future will also be built by working together, and would require yet more hard work, difficult choices and shared sacrifices.

“Make no mistake: the path before us will not be easy, but that’s OK, because we understand that anything worth having, anything of real and lasting value, really does not come easy. And the thing worth having is a KershawHealth that is stronger and better and able to serve its community for generations to come,” he said.

Wiechart said he hoped five years from now, everyone would look back and celebrate the vision of a better, stronger KershawHealth. He said he could ask for no better partner on the journey to the achievement of that vision than MUSC Health.

Wiechart introduced Dr. Patrick J. Cawley, CEO of MUSC Medical Center, who said KershawHealth and MUSC Health’s partnership actually began years ago with tele-medicine programs, allowing MUSC physicians in the Lowcountry to consult via technology on cases at KershawHealth. Along the way, Cawley said, Capella offered itself as a partner MUSC could work with to further MUSC’s mission to improve the health of all South Carolinians.



"And we do that in three ways: we do that through critical care; we also do it through teaching because we think teaching is very important for the next generation; and we also do it through introducing innovative care to those who need it," Cawley said.

He said MUSC Health saw it could accomplish its goals better by partnership with Capella and KershawHealth and, thereby, "deliver great things to this area."

"We think this is something we're all going to look back on five years from now and say, 'Why didn't we do it sooner,'" Cawley said.

State Rep. Laurie Slade Funderburk also spoke during the ceremony, saying Capella and MUSC Health's investment will take the community to "great new places."

"As Capella and the partnership with MUSC has welcomed KershawHealth into their family, we, Kershaw County, are welcoming the partnership into our Kershaw County family," Funderburk said.

Capella Executive Vice President/President of Hospital Operations Mark Medley said he wanted to recognize one particular group: the associates, or employees, of KershawHealth.

Cawley, then asked two of KershawHealth's longest serving employees -- Med 1 Nurse Sally Barrett and Sterile Processing Manager David Stratford -- to join him and Wiechart in unveiling the new signage atop the medical center announcing the affiliation with MUSC Health.



Monday's event also served as the official kickoff for KershawHealth's participation in a fundraising campaign for the United Way of Kershaw County (UWKC). With Gunn looking on, Wiechart presented a mock up of a check for \$5,000 to UWKC President Donny Supplee.

Afterward, Gunn invited everyone attending into the main lobby to enjoy refreshments, including a cake sporting the Capella-MUSC Health Network logo.

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