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UPMC Pinnacle to close Lancaster hospital formerly known as St. Joseph's



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The former St. Joseph Hospital, currently called UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster, is closing after 135 years in Lancaster city.

The hospital's current owner, Harrisburg-based UPMC Pinnacle, **announced the planned closure Tuesday afternoon**, just 17 months after acquiring the 214-bed hospital at 250 College Avenue in Lancaster city.

According to a news release, all inpatient services will move to UPMC Pinnacle Lititz, its sister hospital at 1500 Highlands Drive in Warwick Township, by March 2019.

The two hospitals have cycled through several owners in the last couple of years, and both have long had lots of empty beds.

The closure will leave the county with just three hospitals – UPMC Pinnacle Lititz, which has 148 beds but only 102 set up and staffed at last report; the 533-bed Lancaster General Hospital in Lancaster city, which has long dominated the market and run full; and the 141-bed WellSpan Ephrata Community Hospital in Ephrata, which usually reports roughly as many admissions as both UPMC hospitals combined.

A look back at St. Joseph Hospital

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Local officials **reacted with sadness to official word of UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster's pending shutdown.**

The system called the news part of a plan “to ensure the continued availability of the high-quality clinical care expected of UPMC for Lancaster-area communities.”

“Integrating duplicative services and investing in the Lititz campus is the right thing to do for our patients in order to provide the best possible care,” said Philip Guarneschelli, UPMC Pinnacle president and CEO.

He said the change “will build on Lititz’s strengths — such as its high patient satisfaction scores and its leading women’s program — while investing in new technology and services, including an interventional cardiology program, to make a great campus even better.”

UPMC Pinnacle analyzes the system, community needs, and the available resources on an ongoing basis “in order to provide the best patient experience, highest quality of care, and best cost,” it said.

The system said it “will collaborate with local providers of inpatient care, including nearby Lancaster General Health (about 1.2 miles away from UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster), on meeting the needs of the local community.”

Some outpatient services will be offered at the medical office building across the street from UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster, the release said — “primary care, pediatric and internal medicine offices, as well as a residency clinic” with “expanded hours of operation.”

As for the UPMC Pinnacle hospital building, the release said, "No final plan has been determined for the future use of the Lancaster facility. Several options to benefit the community are under consideration. Information will be shared when a plan is final."

The system **listed plans** to add unspecified new services to the Women's Place at UPMC Pinnacle Lititz; expand on current orthopedics, spine, and sports medicine and cardiac programs; and expand collaboration with UPMC and implement UPMC programs "such as a world-class UPMC Hillman Cancer program."

Employees affected

The release did not say how many employees would be affected, but said the system "aims to retain and place as many Lancaster employees as possible in positions within UPMC."

"UPMC Pinnacle will also work closely with local hospitals to identify and share available positions with affected employees," it said.

LNP reports from 2000 show that St. Joseph Hospital had 1,049 employees then, including 496 medical staff.

In November 2016, hospital spokeswoman Danielle Gilmore said the combined workforce between the sister hospitals in Lancaster and Lititz was about 1,300 people.

At that point the system was putting just over 1 percent of its employees on furlough because fewer patients were coming through their doors, Gilmore said.

History

UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster is the oldest of the four general hospitals in Lancaster County, founded by The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia in 1883 in a building erected in 1877 by the Brothers of St. John of God.

 **[History of St. Joseph Hospital in Lancaster: Bob Hope, the nuns and more \[photos\]](#)**

For most of its history the hospital was a faith-based nonprofit called St. Joseph Hospital. In 2000 it became a for-profit called Lancaster Regional Medical Center, and last September it switched back to being nonprofit with the new name of UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster.



The Lancaster hospital is licensed for 214 beds, but over the years has reduced the number of beds set up and staffed. From 2015 through 2017, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the number dropped to 156, then 144, then 136.

During that time, the records show, the hospital's occupancy rate was 43 percent, then 44 percent, then 40 percent.

At last report its sister hospital in Lititz had 102 of its 148 licensed beds set up and staffed, with an occupancy rate of 24 percent.

Feeling blessed, the sisters of St. Joseph Hospital gave all



Officials react with sadness to closing of UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster hospital



[UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster hospital closing; by the numbers, reaction \[full coverage\]](#)



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St. Joseph's Hospital closing



