EDUCATION

Tower Health, Drexel to develop campus

Medical school branch will be in West Reading

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WEST READING » Tower Health and Drexel University have announced plans to develop a Berks County branch medical school campus of Drexel University College of Medicine.

The agreement was outlined during a press conference Monday morning.

The branch campus will bring undergraduate and graduate clinical education and research to West Reading according to a statement.

It will be located near the Reading Hospital campus, and is expected to be operational for the 2020-2021 school year, after receiving the appropriate accreditation.

According to Tower Health’s President and Chief Executive Officer Clint Matthews, the affiliation leverages the reputation of Drexel and Tower Health’s clinical quality of care, “as a provider and payer.”

“This innovative collaboration also addresses the challenge of an increased demand for highly trained physicians, and will provide a positive economic impact to the Berks County region,” he said in a press release.

Tower Health is currently evaluating potential sites, and has not made a final determination on where to locate the branch campus.

Information is not yet available on the number of students that will study at the branch campus, according to a Tower Health spokeswoman.

“We are so pleased to share with Tower Health in this effort to expand opportunities for medical training in our region, which will benefit practitioners and patients alike,” said John Fry, Drexel president, in a statement.

The branch campus of Drexel University College of Medicine is also expected to result in increased jobs for physicians, educators and other disciplines in the Berks County region, the release says.

“We are very excited about this new collaboration, which offers our students a great opportunity to train with excellent physicians at a top-quality facility,” said Drexel College of Medicine Dean Daniel V. Schidlow, MD.

The Tower Health system has 11,000 employees at six regional hospitals. In addition to Reading Hospital in West Reading, the system consists of Brandywine Hospital in Caln Township, Chestnut Hill Hospital in Philadelphia, Jennersville Hospital in Penn Township in southern Chester County, Phoenixville Hospital in Phoenixville and Pottstown Hospital in Pottstown. It also includes Reading Hospital Rehabilitation at Wyomissing; Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences in West Reading; and a network of 2,000 physicians, specialists and providers across 65 locations.

Brandywine, Chestnut Hill, Jennersville, Phoenixville and Pottstown hospitals were purchased last year by Reading Health System — now Tower Health — from former owner Community Health Systems Inc. of Franklin, Tenn. The transaction, announced in May 2017, was finalized Sept. 29 and became effective Oct. 1.

While terms of last fall’s sale were not publicly announced, according to information filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission in November by Community Health Systems Inc., Tower Health paid approximately $418 million for the five properties.

Drexel University College of Medicine is the successor to two historic medical schools: Hahnemann Medical College and the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania, the first medical school in the world for women. Today, the school has more than 1,000 medical students.

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Tower Health is partnering with Drexel University to develop a Berks County branch medical school campus of Drexel University College of Medicine. The agreement was announced Monday. Shown here signing the agreement are left to right: Clint Matthews, Tower Health president and CEO; Daniel Schidlow, MD, Drexel College of Medicine Dean; and John Fry, Drexel president. The campus is expected to open for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Tower Health is partnering with Drexel University to develop a Berks County branch medical school campus of Drexel University College of Medicine. The campus will be located near Reading Hospital in West Reading, Berks County, which is shown here. Tower Health owns Reading Hospital and five regional hospitals in Chester and Montgomery counties and Philadelphia.