LI Community Hospital, NYU Langone seek state approval for merger, with plans for $100M in upgrades

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The proposed merger between the region's last independent hospital, Long Island Community Hospital, and NYU Langone Health is set to go before a state Department of Health panel for approval next week, as NYU Langone announced plans to spend $100 million on upgrades to the Patchogue facility.

The merger received preliminary approval when it went before a committee of the state Department of Health's Public Health and Health Planning Council last month, a state spokesman said.

The next step is for the full council to vote on Dec. 9, the state spokesman said.

The proposed merger is expected to receive state approval, possibly with contingencies, Dr. Andrew Brotman, executive vice president and chief clinical officer at NYU Langone, said Thursday.

NYU Langone and LICH plan to close on the deal in February, and the full merger will take up to three years, he said.

NYU Langone intends to spend $100 million on the first improvements to the 306-bed hospital, but that is only a "down payment," with further investments to come, Brotman said.

By the end of next year, NYU Langone will bring LICH into its electronic medical records system, Brotman said. It also plans to improve the emergency room, operating rooms and other facilities, and hire more

physicians and other staff for a "multispecialty group practice" offering primary, specialty and surgical care, he said.

The hospital's name is expected to remain unchanged until it undergoes certain upgrades, though eventually it will take on NYU Langone as part of its name, Brotman said.

The merger would "streamline the provision and coordination of the highest quality patient care and improve financial stability," NYU Langone and LICH wrote in their application to the state.

LICH "has a state-of-the-art Cardiology Center, a new surgical pavilion and an array of physician practices, outpatient facilities and services," the two institutions wrote in the application. But, they wrote, "with a breakeven operating margin, LICH lacks adequate cash flow to make significant investments in its campus and ambulatory programs."

The merger, they wrote, "will provide LICH with access to additional capital and NYU Langone's operational efficiencies and strategies and afford LICH's patients seamless access to...[high-level] care not available locally."

LICH and NYU Langone began discussing a potential merger in April. In July, they reached a deal to bring LICH into NYU Langone's network.

At the time, LICH's president and CEO, Richard T. Margulis, said in a statement that the agreement "will allow us to... more effectively meet the challenges of the ever-changing healthcare marketplace."

Formerly known as Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center, LICH serves an area of 400,000 people.

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