

HAP OKs merger with Ford Health Care

The board of directors of Health Alliance Plan (HAP) have endorsed a proposal which will consolidate Michigan's oldest and largest health maintenance organization and the Henry Ford Health Care Corp. (HFHCC), parent company of Henry Ford Hospital.

The new structure will constitute one of the largest hospital-based prepaid health-care systems in the nation, said HAP Chairman Walter E. Douglas. Douglas said the consolidation proposal is similar to one approved by the HFHCC board earlier this year, but will require reconfirmation by that board at its January meeting.

"Health Alliance Plan and Henry Ford Hospital have developed increasingly close ties since 1979," said HAP President James Walworth, "when the hospital and its ambulatory care facilities first became available to our membership."

Membership in Health Alliance Plan has doubled in the past three years and now totals 176,000, with approximately 60 percent of HAP's members receiving medical care through Henry Ford Hospital physicians. The balance receive care through HAP physicians and medical centers.

This growth has been possible, Walworth said, because the two organizations have developed 12 new facilities since January 1984.

A total of 21 medical centers throughout the tri-county area currently are offered to Health Alliance Plan members.

The merger proposal anticipates consolidation in several phases, beginning with the joining of HAP and Preferred Health Plan (PHP), the HFHCC for-profit health maintenance and preferred provider organization.

With Preferred Health Plan as its subsidiary, HAP will be able to offer a selection of health-plan options unparalleled in Southeastern Michigan, Walworth said, including a unique program for the area's elderly.

"This variety of options will enable even greater numbers of people to take advantage of a prepaid health-care plan," he said.

During the consolidation process, Walworth said, the HAP Facilities Division will be further integrated into HFHCC. The division is presently comprised of two hospitals and eight outpatient centers.

The final phase will unite Health Alliance Plan as a corporate subsidiary with HFHCC, said Walworth.

HAP will maintain its nonprofit status, its own

governing board, and operational control of the prepayment programs offered through HAP and PHP, he said.

"Health Alliance Plan will continue to provide its membership with the same comprehensive benefit package they now receive," said Walworth. Existing patient-physician relationships and medical center affiliations of HAP members will not be altered by the merger, he said.

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