

# Amita Health splitting up health care system, says it needs to be nimble



St. Alexius Medical Center in Hoffman Estates was part of the Amita Health system, but that changed Thursday when the organization announced it's splitting up its hospitals and care centers. ( *Courtesy of Alexian Brothers Health System* )



**Marni Pyke**

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Bucking the trend of health industry mergers, Amita Health is splitting up its massive network of hospitals and care centers throughout Chicago and the suburbs, the company said Thursday.

Amita was founded in April 2015 as a faith-based joint operating company composed of AdventHealth and Alexian Brothers Health System that operated nine hospitals in the Northwest and West suburbs. That's grown to 19 acute and specialty hospitals in Illinois.

"Leaders of both sponsoring organizations have determined that going forward separately is in their collective best interest in order to more nimbly meet the changing needs and expectations of consumers in the rapidly evolving health care environment," officials said in a statement.

The move comes amid the COVID-19 pandemic but executives promised a "smooth and expeditious transition," that would not disrupt patient care.

"Following the transition, AdventHealth and Ascension (Alexian's parent company) will operate their individual hospitals and care sites in the Chicagoland area. AdventHealth and Ascension maintain a strong relationship and are united in ensuring the residents of Chicago have access to the best possible health care," the statement indicated.

The decision "runs counter to trends," said Northwestern University economist David Dranove. "It's highly unusual as hospital systems in most places continue to grow through acquisitions," explained Dranove, a professor of health industry management at Northwestern's Kellogg

## School of Management.

Network hospitals include: Adventist Medical Center-Bolingbrook, Adventist Medical Center-GlenOaks in Glendale Heights, Adventist Medical Center-Hinsdale, Adventist Medical Center-La Grange, Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital in Hoffman Estates, Alexian Brothers Medical Center in Elk Grove Village, Holy Family Medical Center in Des Plaines, Mercy Medical Center Aurora, Amita Health Rehabilitation Hospital in Elk Grove Village, St. Francis Hospital in Evanston, St. Joseph Hospital in Elgin, St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet, St. Alexius Medical Center in Hoffman Estates, and Amita Health Women & Children's Hospital Hoffman Estates,

The organization also operates a hospital in Kankakee and four in Chicago.

At the time of the merger, the former Alexian Brothers Health System was part of Ascension. Presence Health joined the system in 2018 when it was acquired by Ascension.

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