

Banner Health splits Ariz. operations

Top executives reshuffled as hospital network forms 2 divisions

By Ken Alltucker
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Banner Health, the state's largest hospital network, has split its vast Arizona operations into two divisions that will result in a reshuffling of a handful of top executives.

The reorganization comes as the Phoenix-based network completes multiple hospital expansions and absorbs its purchase of the two-hospital Sun

Health network in the Sun Cities. The non-profit hospital network's rapid growth in Arizona over the past few years prompted the split, spokesman Bill Byron said. The firm has 27,458 employees, up 24 percent from 22,152 workers a year ago, according to records compiled by *The Arizona Republic*.

"It gives us a chance to gain greater operational focus," Byron said.

Susan Edwards, who led the

Sun merger and has served as Banner's Arizona division president since June 2002, will leave Banner as part of the reorganization.

Becky Kuhn, chief executive officer of Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center, will head Banner's newly created East region. The East Valley locations include Banner Desert, Gateway, Baywood and Ironwood medical centers as well as Banner Heart Hospital. Banner Children's



**Becky
Kuhn**



**Kathy
Bollinger**

Hospital and Banner Behavioral Health Center.

Kathy Bollinger takes over Banner's West region, which in-

cludes Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center in central Phoenix as well as West Valley hospitals such as Banner Thunderbird, Estrella, Del E. Webb and Boswell medical centers. Bollinger is chief executive of Banner Estrella.

Byron said the moves also will allow Banner to expedite its use of cutting-edge medical technology and information systems designed to improve patient care.

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Banner Health divides Arizona operations into 2 regions

BANNER

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Banner Health's third division oversees out-of-state properties and will not be directly influenced by the Arizona moves.

The reorganization will allow Arizona's largest hospital network and the Phoenix area's second-largest private employer to better manage its recent growth, said Jim

Hertel, publisher of *Arizona Managed Care Newsletter*.

In addition to acquiring the Sun Health network, Banner Health is building a new standalone Banner Children's Hospital at the campus of Banner Desert in Mesa. Next month, Banner will open a new patient tower at Banner Thunderbird Medical Center in Glendale. Banner also has recently built two new hospitals in the East Valley, Banner

Gateway in Gilbert and Banner Ironwood in Queen Creek.

Banner's Phoenix unit has become much larger than many small hospital systems across the country, Hertel said. "Given the pending changes in the national and the metro area health-care markets, it will be a long time before we see new construction on the scale that we have seen it in the Valley over the past few years," Hertel said.

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Balancing cost and quality

Hospitals explore ways to provide cost-effective services

By Rusty Bradshaw
Independent Newspapers

As the economy continues to struggle and the national health care plan begins to come on line, West Valley hospitals are working to adjust.

Banner Health has three hospitals to serve the West Valley — Banner Thunderbird, 5555 W. Thunderbird Road; Banner Boswell, 10401 W. Thunderbird Blvd.; and Banner Del E. Webb, 14502 W. Meeker Blvd. Arrowhead Ranch hosts Arrowhead Hospital, 18701 N. 67th Ave., and Peoria's first hospital, Peoria Regional Medical Center, is under construction at 26230 N. Lake Pleasant Parkway. All are making adjustments to deal

Related Links

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with the changing medical climate.

While Banner Health has made some changes in operation, and will continue to do so, those changes will not be traumatic, according to Greg Wojtal, Banner western region vice president and chief financial officer.

"There won't be much in the way of changes to services," he said. "We always want to be as efficient as possible, but still provide quality care."

The skeletal framework of Peoria's first hospital is complete and the project is moving forward. Visionary Health LLC broke ground June 22, 2011 for the Peoria Regional Medical Center, a planned full-service hospital. Officials expected a 14-month construction period, but have encountered some delays, according to Tim Johns, M.D., Visionary Health medical director and the hospital's founder.

"We had some issues with the site, and rain held us up a bit when we were putting in underground fixtures," Dr. Johns said. Visionary Health officials now expect a Febru-



Courtesy Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center

Banner Del E. Webb volunteer Cliff Smith, right, explains his duties to community members during the non-profit hospital's May 31 volunteer open house. Banner Del E. Webb seeks volunteers to fill a variety of positions throughout the year.

ary opening at the latest.

"If we have an early opening, it would be in the December time frame," Dr. Johns explained.

Peoria Regional Medical Center will be a full-service acute care hospital, providing 18 different medical specialties. However, the center will be sized differently than other hospitals, according to David Wanger, Visionary Health CEO. A 71,242-square-foot facility is slated, providing 20 emergency room beds, six intensive care unit beds and 14 general surgical beds.

The struggling economy has not affected plans for the facility, according to Dr. Johns.

"The scope of the project remains the same," he said.

While Arrowhead Hospital is also impacted by economic factors, officials at that facility did not return Independent e-mails and phones calls

for comment. Michael Neely, contracted to do public relations for the hospital, said in a July 2 phone call the chief executive officer was out of town and the chief financial officer was reluctant to discuss the hospital's position on the record.

Mr. Wojtal said the biggest hurdle for hospitals is the amount of charity cases and bad debt. Hospitals statewide lost \$66 million and Banner's portion of charity and bad debt went from 3.4 percent to 5.4 percent in one year, he added. Some of that is related to national cutbacks in Medicare and Arizona cutbacks in Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System benefits.

In reducing costs, Banner officials are focusing on ridding medical care of wasteful procedures, according to Mr. Wojtal. One step Banner

Hospitals

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officials took in that area was creating the Banner Health Network, he added.

"That helps us deliver the most cost effective care at high quality," he said.

While some measures mean lost jobs, Banner Health officials try to keep that at a minimum. Mr. Wojtal said the majority of personnel reductions have come in not filling some vacated positions at times. That approach is expected to continue.

"I don't see any mass layoffs in our future," he said. "We are looking to get the right people in the right jobs."

With a completed expansion, Banner Thunderbird actually added jobs, Mr. Wojtal pointed out.

With the steel frame in place, construction crews at Peoria Regional Medical Center are now turning their attention to the interior layout and putting the exterior covering on the building, according to Dr. Johns. The current structure will not be the end of the hospital project, he added.

"Eventually, we plan to have 220 beds for this hospital," Dr. John said.

The first phase of PRMC is smaller than other Northwest Valley hospitals.

The Peoria hospital will provide about 250 jobs. Most jobs would be open to people outside Visionary Health, according to Mr. Wanger.

Construction cost is \$17 million and will go up to about \$31 million including the working capital, such as equipment.

Dr. Johns said the average salary will be \$70,000 per year. He also said the hospital will be run by doctors and will focus on patient care rather than the financial bottom line.

The PRMC site includes 47 acres of land. Dr. Johns said future development will include medical office buildings. While these additions are still in the planning stages, Visionary Health officials already see interest from potential tenants, according to Dr. Johns.

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Planned

Banner, AMC join forces

STAFF REPORT

Banner Health has joined forces with Arizona Medical Clinic, adding to Banner's growing presence in the West Valley that sometime next year is expected to include a merger with Sun Health.

Just a week after announcing plans for a major merger with Sun Health, Banner officials said Monday they also will partner with Arizona Medical, a multi-specialty clinic of 88 physicians and 15 mid-level health care providers. Arizona Medical Clinic, founded in 1974, has two main campuses with other satellite facilities in Sun City, Sun City West and Peoria. It has two surgery centers, an eye clinic, pain clinic and same-day care clinics as well as comprehensive imaging services.

"This is a way we can help address the physician shortage by offering physicians different choices," said Suzanne Coyne, regional vice president of physician resources for Banner Health.

"Banner is a perfect partner for us. We've both invested heavily in Electronic Medical Records and very interested in using rapidly improving technology to improve patient care," said Dave Kobriger, CEO of Arizona

SEE BANNER, A5

BANNER: Partnership boosts recruitment capabilities

FROM A1

Medical Clinic.

The partnership also will make it easier for the Arizona Medical Clinic to continue to recruit physicians to the West Valley," said Dr. Alan Grobman, chief medical officer for Arizona Medical Clinic.

"Increasingly, physicians may not be as interested in setting up their own practices. Being employed physicians means that they don't have to worry as much about billing and practice management," he said.

Having employed physicians allows Banner to offer a wider variety of specialists. Banner Health and Arizona Medical Clinic also will be able to share technology for better patient care.

"Our partnership can reduce duplication of efforts and reduce errors. It can streamline the processes and improve the patient experience whether they are in the physicians' office or in one of our hospital rooms," Grobman said.

Headquartered in Phoenix, Banner Health

is one of the largest non-profit health care systems in the country. The system owns or manages 20 acute-care hospitals, long-term care centers, outpatient surgery centers and an array of other services including family clinics, home care and hospice services, an Alzheimer's institute and a nursing registry.

Last month, Sun Health and Banner announced plans to merge and form a giant non-profit health care organization. The merger could take between six to nine

months to wend its way through legal procedures before being finalized.

Arizona Medical has campuses in Peoria at 13640 N. Plaza del Rio Blvd. and 13760 N. 93rd Ave., Suite 101, and in Sun City West at 14416 W. Meeker Blvd., where a same day care clinic is operated. Arizona Medical Clinic Physical Therapy Center is at 14418 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West, and the Orthopedic, Podiatry and Spine Center is at 13188 N. 103rd Drive, Suite 209, Sun City.

A BANNER DAY

Hospital groups announce merger, local facilities will take Banner name

JOY SLABOWSKI
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun Health has announced its plans to merge with Banner Health, Arizona's second largest private employer, combining forces to form a giant nonprofit health care organization.

Hospital officials announced the approval of a letter of intent, which details plans for Sun Health to join Banner Health, in a press conference Friday, which was attended by leadership of both health networks.

The merger needs to go through several legal procedures, including the Federal Trade Commission, a process that is expected to take between six and nine months.

"Both Sun Health and Banner Health share similar values that are deeply rooted in our respective nonprofit traditions of providing comprehensive, award-winning patient care and nationally recognized service to our communities," said Leland Peterson, president and CEO of Sun Health. "This merger is being pursued for very positive reasons (including) the desire to join with a well-respected, locally based organization that shares our vision of enhanced services for the community's overall benefit. It is critically important to meeting the challenges of the rapidly growing West Valley's increased health care needs and fast-paced technological advances."

Banner Health representa-

tives spoke of how merging the two health care groups will help address the needs of a growing community.

"We are honored we are becoming your colleagues," said Peter Fine, president and CEO of Banner Health. "Sun Health has a profound and deep connection to the community, as shown in its 4,000 volunteers.

"The community benefits we will be able to provide through this transaction are profound, as this proposal supports a vision of enhanced patient care in the West Valley that includes continued expansion of facilities, expedited acquisition of new technologies such as electronic medical records and enhanced education and training opportunities dedicated to providing excellent patient care," Fine said.

The merger will be most visible in names change from Sun Health to Banner including both Sun Health Boswell and Sun Health Del E. Webb hospitals, the Sun Health Research Institute, Sun Health MediSun, Sun Health Boswell Rehabilitation Center, Sun Health Residence for



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Leland Peterson, left, president and chief executive officer of Sun Health, and Peter Fine, president and chief executive officer of Banner Health, meet with the media to announce a proposed merger of the two companies Friday.

See MERGER, A5

MERGER: No changes for MediSun

From A1

Alzheimer's Care, Sun Health Residence for Special Needs Adults, Sun Health Olive Branch Senior Center, Sun Health Community Education & Wellness Center and others.

The Sun Health Foundation, Sun Health Auxiliary and Sun Health Properties will remain independent and continue to generate charitable contributions for Boswell and Del E. Webb hospitals, the SHRI and other projects.

Though hospital leaders say there are some duplications in services, the merger does not include plans for staff reductions.

Customers of MediSun will not find any changes in their enrollment.

"No action is necessary by the patients," Peterson said. "MediSun enrollees don't change."

In addition, the expansion projects under way are still on target.

The \$25 million capital expansion campaign has reached \$16 million in donations and is still taking contributions.

The merger will not affect that campaign.

"That remains a Sun Health Foundation (campaign)," Peterson said. "And we'll continue to meet that goal."

The future of the collaboration with Phoenix Children's Hospital, which was to take place

at the Surprise health care campus, continues to be an "ongoing conversation," Peterson said.

"They have a strong interest to be part of the Sun Health properties," Peterson said. "(Those plans) are in the hands of Phoenix Children's Hospital."

The urgent care, physicians offices and advanced diagnostics center under construction in north Peoria, at Jomax Road and Lake Pleasant Parkway, is still on target to be completed by September 2008, said Keith Dines, Sun Health executive vice president for strategic development.

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Phoenix-based nonprofit health group adds to network

STAFF REPORT

Banner Health is based in Phoenix and is one of the nation's largest nonprofit health care systems in the country.

It was founded in 1911 in a downtown residence and is now Arizona's second-largest private employer, with more than 20,500 employees and 2,525 licensed beds on eight hospital campuses

Banner has more than 27,000 employees nationally. The nonprofit serves Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming.

In addition to basic emergency and medical services, Banner Health offers a variety of specialized services, from heart and cancer care to high-order multiple births and organ transplants, as well as Level 1 trauma services, rehabilitation services and behavioral health services.

Banner also is involved in cutting-edge research aimed at helping patients suffering from serious diseases and conditions, including spinal cord injuries and Alzheimer's disease.

Banner is developing a partnership with the University of Arizona that will increase the number of MD-trained physicians in Arizona.

The foundations of the partnership include a College of Medicine hospital, the transition of Banner Good Samaritan's Graduate Medical Education program into the college's GME program, and a National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer hospital, the first in Arizona.

Both hospitals will be constructed, owned and operated by Banner. The College of Medicine hospital, which will have a medical staff of full-time COM faculty, is envisioned to be 200 beds. The cancer hospital will be under the direction of the COM's Tucson-based Arizona Cancer Center.

Banner Health has 3,068 licensed beds, admits 190,452 people excluding newborns, delivers 33,425 babies, performs nearly 152,000 surgeries and registers more than 500,000 emergency patients.

Peter S. Fine serves as the company's president and CEO, a position he has served in since November 2000. Fine reports to a 15-member board of directors chaired by Mark Sklar. The company has annual revenue of about \$3.1 billion and assets totaling \$4.1 billion.

See **BANNER, A5**

BANNER: Sites include Thunderbird in Glendale

From A1

Banner's Valley hospital campuses are Banner Desert Medical Center and Banner Children's Hospital in Mesa, Banner Baywood Medical Center in Mesa, Banner Heart Hospital in Mesa, Banner Gateway Medical Center in Gilbert, Banner Thunderbird Medical Center in Glendale, Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center in Phoenix and Banner Estrella Medical Center in Phoenix.

Banner announces leadership teams

STAFF REPORT

Sun Health's transition into Banner Health this week brought leadership changes to the newly named Banner Boswell and Banner Del E. Webb medical centers.

At Banner Boswell:

- Dave Cheney is the new CEO. He joins the hospital after serving as senior administrator at Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center.

- Susan Nick is the interim chief nursing officer. She comes to Banner Health with an extensive background in nursing, including serving as vice president of clinical services and chief nurse executive for Weiss Memorial Hospital in Chicago, where she oversaw nursing, pharmacy and other clinical areas and support functions.

- Gregory Wojtal is the chief financial officer. He is an experienced financial officer with more than 25 years in health care, and most recently served as Banner Estrella's chief financial officer and associate administrator.

- Gary Pastore is chief human resources officer. Most recently, he served as director of human resources for both Sun Health Boswell and Sun Health Del E. Webb hospitals.

- Debbie Flores is associate administrator. She brings 27 years of experience in health-care leadership and operations. She most recently served as associate administrator of Banner Estrella.

- Barbara Minick is associate administrator. She more than 25 years of experience in leadership positions, most of those in health care. She is no stranger to Banner Boswell, having worked there since 2002, first as director of strategic planning and then as vice



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Members of the Banner Boswell Medical Center's new leadership team are, from left, Debbie Flores, associate administrator; Dave Cheney, chief executive officer; Gary Pastor, chief human resources officer; Barbara Minick, associate administrator; and Greg Wojtal, chief financial officer. Susan Nick, interim chief nursing officer, is not pictured.



Members of the Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center's new leadership team are, from left, Michelle Winters, chief nursing officer; Becky Kuhn, chief executive officer; Marie Stehmer, chief human resources officer; Kirk Kearl, chief financial officer; and Gary Dechert, associate administrator.

president of Professional Services.

At Banner Del E. Webb:

- Becky Kuhn is the new CEO. She has extensive experience in hospital administration and joins the hospital after serving as CEO for Banner Gateway Medical Center in Gilbert.

- Michelle Winters is the new chief nursing officer. She has more than 20 years of experience, and comes to the hospital from Banner Thunderbird, where she served as nursing director for pediatric and neonatal services.

- Kirk Kearl is chief financial officer. He has more than 25 years of experience, most recently as chief financial officer for Banner Gateway Medical Center in Gilbert.

- Marie Stehmer is chief human resources. She has been with the Sun Health organization since 1987, and most recently served as director of human resources.

- Gary Dechert is the new associate administrator and has more than 25 years of experience. He previously served as vice president of Professional Services for the hospital.

Leadership changes mark merger

Three of the Sun Health facilities now under the Banner Health umbrella are Banner Boswell Medical Center in Sun City, Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center in Sun City West and Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City, which will retain its name.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun Health facilities acquire new names

JOY SLAGOWSKI
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The start of the "very complex" transition of Sun Health to Banner Health began Tuesday with leadership changes, name changes, a commitment to Alzheimer's research and praise for the "amazing volunteer organization" in place at the medical facilities in the Sun Cities.

"Banner is thrilled to welcome Sun Health and finalize its full integration into our system," said Susan Edwards, president of Banner Health's Arizona Region. "Sun Health has established a legacy of outstanding patient care and community services, and we will honor that legacy through the fulfillment of our nonprofit mission of making a difference in people's lives through excellent patient care."

At a news conference Tuesday afternoon, several leadership changes were announced.

Dave Cheney is the new CEO of Banner Boswell Medical Center in Sun City, and Becky Kuhn is the new CEO of Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center in Sun City West.

Cheney most recently served as senior administrator at Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center, and Kuhn formerly served as CEO of Banner Gateway Medical Center in Gilbert.

At the Sun Health Research Institute, Bill Camp, who had been serving as the executive vice president/COO, is now the CEO. Former CEO, Dr. Joe Rogers, has accepted a position as senior scientist with the L.J.

SEE BANNER, A5

BANNER: Town hall meetings set for employees

FROM A1

Roberts Center for Alzheimer's Research. And Dr. Marwan Sabbagh, MD, is now chief medical-scientific officer and will continue his role as director of the Cleo Roberts Center for Clinical Research.

Nancy Burton, former CEO of Sun Health Boswell Hospital, has accepted a position as CEO with Banner's Ironwood Medical Center in Pinal County.

Bill Byron, Banner system director/public relations, said that close to 40 Sun Health employees were affected in Tuesday's staff eliminations. More staff changes could come as the merger continues and Banner examines roles and potential duplication of duties between the organizations.

"This is a very complex transition of some 4,500 employees transitioning into Banner Health from Sun Health," Byron said.

Those employees who fall below upper management level are assured their jobs for at least the next six months, Byron said.

Pamela Meyerhoffer, CEO of the Sun Health Foundation, said despite changes, much of what the community associates with Sun Health will remain.

"Although there are some new faces, there are thousands that are the same," Meyerhoffer said.

Meyerhoffer said the Sun Health Foundation, auxiliary and properties will remain separate from the Banner merger.

Additionally, the Sun Health Research Institute also will retain its name for the foreseeable future, Byron said.

Public financial support of those entities is still needed, Meyerhoffer said.

"Our continued support by charitable contributions continues," Meyerhoffer said. "We depend on philanthropic contributions and still have the same need and focus for that support."

The collaboration of Alzheimer's researchers from the Sun Health Research Institute and Banner Alzheimer Institute is also an exciting prospect, Byron said.

"The level of collaboration will tremendously enhance research, having them all under the same umbrella," Byron said. "It will be pretty powerful, and we're very excited."

Byron said Banner also hopes to learn from the Sun Health volunteer organization.

"(It is) an amazing volunteer organization, and we have a lot to learn about how they do it,"

Byron said.

Banner will conduct a series of meetings with leaders throughout the new Banner facilities to provide details about the transition. On Thursday, Banner will launch a series of Town Hall meetings open to all employees who will learn more about Banner Health, their benefits and other items.

Sun Health was founded in 1966 and grew into a comprehensive health-care network that includes 4,500 employees, 4,000 volunteers and 831 licensed beds on two hospital campuses.

The Banner Health system, which is based in Arizona, has more than 28,000 employees in the state and 11 hospitals in the Valley. Banner Health is one of the nation's largest nonprofit health care systems in the country.

It was founded in 1911 in a downtown residence and is now Arizona's second-largest private employer. Banner serves Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming.

In addition to basic emergency and medical services, Banner Health offers a variety of specialized services, from heart and cancer care to high-order multiple births and organ transplants as well as Level 1

NAME CHANGES

- Banner Boswell Medical Center
- Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center
- Banner Boswell Rehabilitation Center
- Banner Boswell Medical Center - Imaging Center
- Banner Health Center - Wickenburg
- Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center - Urgent Care
- Banner Olive Branch Senior Center
- Banner Alzheimer's Residence
- Banner Special Adults Residence
- Banner Community Education & Wellness Center

The Boswell and Del E. Webb names were retained because they are widely known and Banner wanted to honor their legacy.

NO CURRENT NAME CHANGES

- Sun Health Research Institute
- MediSun Health Plan

trauma services, rehabilitation services and behavioral health services.

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Banner completes acquisition

Hospital group renames Sun Health facilities, swaps out management teams

By Ken Alltucker
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Banner Health this week completed its \$316 million purchase of Sun Health Corp. and immediately swapped out the management teams and changed the names of Sun Health's two hospitals located in the Sun City area.

Long-time fixtures in the Sun City and Sun City West communities, the facilities are now named Banner Bos-

well Medical Center and Banner Del. E. Webb Medical Center.

Up to 40 duplicate executive and administrative positions have been eliminated as a result of the merger, and more positions may be impacted as hospital operations are converted over the coming months, Banner representatives said Tuesday. Non-executives whose jobs are eliminated will receive job-assistance service through Banner's career-transition center.

The deal bolsters Banner's position

as Arizona's largest hospital group, creating a dominant 11-hospital organization with about 28,000 employees, 3,300 beds, and significant influence over the Valley's health-care system. Banner is the second-largest private employer in the Phoenix area, trailing only Wal-Mart.

"All of our planning efforts have been focused on this week for a long time," Banner CEO Peter Fine said. The Sun City communities "can expect Banner to continue to invest re-

sources into their community to provide the best health-care service that we can and continue to support all the efforts they have had over time."

The Banner-Sun Health merger was announced nearly one year ago and received clearance from the Federal Trade Commission in late June, removing one potential regulatory hurdle to the combination of the two hospital groups.

In July, Banner issued about \$1.3 billion in bonds to refinance debt,

See **BANNER** Page D2

Banner completes acquisition

BANNER

Continued from D1

fund ongoing capital projects and pay for the \$316 million purchase of Sun Health.

Terms of the merger required Banner to assume just over \$200 million in Sun Health debt.

Three entities from the original Sun Health — Sun Health Foundation, Sun Health Auxiliary and Sun Health Properties — all will keep their name because they were not part of the merger.

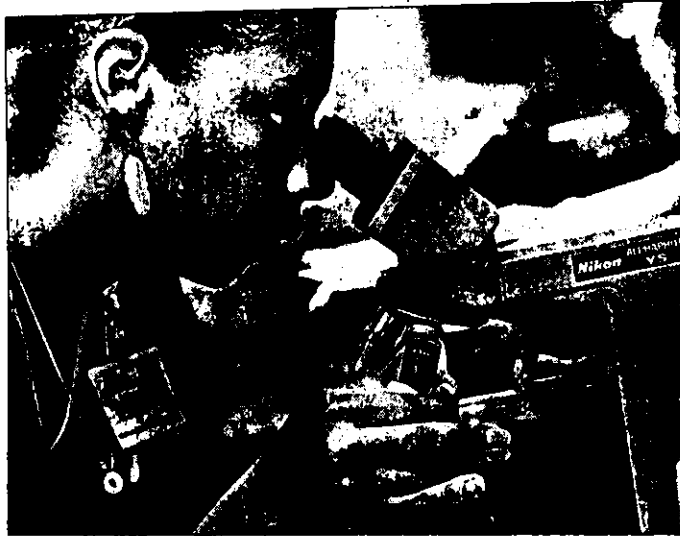
Sun Health Research Institute (SHRI), which has drawn national acclaim for its research of age-related diseases such as Alzheimer's, will retain its name after the merger. But like the hospitals, its management was reshuffled.

SHRI CEO Joe Rogers agreed to step down and take a position as a staff scientist. Bill Camp was named CEO of Sun Health Research Institute and Marwan Sabbagh was named chief medical officer.

"I'm just going to be one of the scientists now," Rogers said Tuesday. "But I had a wonderful ride. I am looking forward to getting back in the lab and continue what I started 35 years ago: creating a cure," for Alzheimer's disease.

Banner representatives said that Sun Health's volunteers and community fundraising efforts will be pivotal to the hospital system's overall financial success. The Sun Health hospitals were heavily dependent on Medicare, which often reimburses at a lower rate than private insurers.

Other Sun Health entities that would be folded into Banner include Sun Health Medi-Sun, Sun Health Boswell Rehabilitation Center, Sun Health Residence for Special Adults, Sun Health Olive Branch Senior Center and Sun Health Community Education



DAVID WALLACE/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Jonette Watson-Henry, a pathology technician, looks through a microscope at the Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City.

Management plan

Banner Health announced new management teams at its newly acquired Sun Health hospitals:

■ Dave Cheney, a senior administrator at Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center in Phoenix, has been named Banner Boswell Medical Center's new CEO.

■ Becky Kuhn, previously CEO of Banner Gateway Medical Center in Gilbert, was named CEO of Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center.

& Wellness Center.

Meanwhile, Phoenix Children's Hospital is among the hospitals interested in the outcome of the Banner-Sun Health merger.

Last year, Phoenix Children's Hospital announced plans to open a pediatric urgent-care clinic with Sun Health at a planned medical campus in Surprise.

"That was moving along nicely before the merger, but it has since been on hold, appropriately so," said Robert

Meyer, chief executive officer of Phoenix Children's Hospital. "We would obviously have an interest in continuing discussions."

Still, Banner is expanding its own children's hospital at Banner Desert Medical Center in Mesa, and has significantly ramped up its pediatric services. It's unclear if Banner would need to partner with Phoenix Children's Hospital in Surprise.

Fine said Banner has not yet made a decision whether to continue the Surprise development.

"There are other things that were in early stages of development — Surprise being an example of one — that we will take our time and review," he said.

Meyer said Phoenix Children's Hospital has continued its expansion in the West Valley, purchasing a building near 51st Avenue and Loop 101 with plans to open a pediatric urgent-care facility there by mid-2009.

Reach the reporter at ken.alltucker@arizonarepublic.com or 602-444-8285.

Wheeled history gets a showing

Model home part of Historical Society open house Feb. 2

By Rusty Bradshaw
Independent Newspapers

Driving was an adventure in the 1920s and 1930s because it was still a novelty. Today the vehicles from that era are prized collectors items.

Some of those cars, and others from more recent times, will be on display during an antique car show and open house 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Feb. 2 at the Grand Center, 107th and Grand avenues, across from the Historical Society, 10801 Oakmont Drive.

The event is sponsored by the Sun City Area Historical Society and Liberty Buick, 8737 W. Bell Road, Peoria.

The show will feature 25 antique cars, many part of the CARS Club of Sun City, another event partner. In addition, Liberty Buick will display some of its newest models, according to Edison Allen, Historical Society president.

The CARS Club was started in 1981 by two Sun City residents who each owned a Model T Ford.

"We had to go all the way to Phoenix to be part of a car club and we wanted something closer to home," said club co-founder Bebe Lovitt.

She owned a 1926 touring car, but sold it about 15 years ago. It is now owned by her grandson.



Submitted photo

This Model T, owned by Sun City West resident Gene Carter, is one of several cars to be included in the antique car show and Sun Cities Area Historical Society open house.

Ruth Martin, the other club founder, owned a 1924 Roadster at the time, according to her son, James Martin.

Because it became unreliable, she later sold it and bought a 1930 Model A two-door, which she still owns, he added.

Ms. Martin and Ms. Lovitt remain active in the CARS Club.

"The club has grown quite a

bit since we started it," Ms. Lovitt said. "It now includes reproductions, classics and sentimentals."

While they no longer drive their cars, both women travel on club trips and to various car shows.

Cars in the show will span 60 years, Mr. Allen said.

In addition to the car show, the Historical Society will be open to

allow visitors to see local history.

They can also view a model home as it might have appeared in 1960, according to Mr. Allen. Complementary coffee and other refreshments will be available at the Historical Society.

Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at www.newszap.com. Lead News Editor Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.