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Jefferson, Aria complete merger of health systems

Integration is part of an eventual 11-hospital organization across the Delaware Valley

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Pictured L to R: Jefferson Health COO Laurence Merlis, Aria Board of Directors Chair Robert Truitt, President and CEO of Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health Stephen Klasko, Aria CEO Kathleen Kinslow and Jefferson Board of Trustees Chair Richard Hevner.

At a press conference on Wednesday, leaders from Jefferson and Aria Health celebrated the finalized transformation more than two years after the start of a strategic planning and partnership exploration process at Aria. The organizations entered into a letter of intent last October and signed a definitive agreement in January.

“Bringing Aria and Jefferson together is another significant step forward, as a progressive organization, to do things differently for the benefit of patients, medical professionals, employees, faculty and students in the regions that we all serve,” said

Stephen Klasko, president and CEO of Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health. “There are deep similarities between the cultures of Jefferson and Aria and a shared commitment to reimagining healthcare access and delivery.”

The merger comes just over a year after Jefferson joined forces with Abington Health in May 2015, integrating the latter’s two hospitals, outpatient care centers and medical practices in Montgomery and Bucks counties. In January, Jefferson also signed a Letter of Intent to integrate Kennedy Health into its system to

better serve patients in South Jersey.

Separately, Thomas Jefferson University is finalizing a merger with Philadelphia University, which just received city approval for a rezoning of the 101-acre master plan at its East Falls campus.

With Aria Health now in the fold, the combined organization consists of 23,000 employees, 5,000 physicians/practitioners, 5,770 nurses, and 2,217 inpatient beds.

As a result of the merger, Aria will add the Jefferson brand to its legacy name, moving forward as Aria Health – Jefferson at its Frankford, Torresdale and Bucks County hospitals. Jefferson’s governance structure will feature a combined board with equal representation from Jefferson, Abington and Aria.

“This is an exceptional moment for the Aria family of patients, physicians and staff,” said Aria CEO Kathleen Kinslow, who will retain her position while serving as Executive Vice President and Chief Integration Officer at Jefferson Health. “We are eager to combine Aria’s demonstrated ability to deliver high-quality care and exceptional service in our communities with Jefferson’s excellence in delivering complex, compassionate care. By joining Aria with Jefferson and Abington, we truly are better together.”