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CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

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KPMG mentioned as advisers for hospital venture

Saudis seek contract with Brighton Hospital

St. John Health System's Brighton Hospital has signed a letter of intent to begin discussions on a long-term management contract with a Saudi Arabian company that is building a 250-bed addiction treatment hospital in Riyadh.

After a nine-month international search, Brighton Hospital was chosen over other more famous and larger addiction treatment providers in Europe and the U.S. because of its expertise, high success rate, clinical care model and 12-step treatment approach, said Mohammed Al-Turaiki, CEO of Saudi Care for Rehabilitation and Health Care in Riyadh.

"We are so impressed with Brighton and want to involve them in every step in this project," said Al-Turaiki, who is a world-renowned bioengineer and rehabilitation specialist. He also is president of the Islamic World Council on Disability and Rehabilitation.

Al-Turaiki said the management contract with Brighton would cover consulting, management, recruiting, technology transfer and clinical services.

"We were attracted by their comprehensive approach because it is not just medical with them; it includes spiritual attention," Al-Turaiki said. "Brighton's 12-step protocol is very easily adapted to Islam."

Made famous by Alcoholics Anonymous, the 12-step approach used by Brighton includes a commitment by people to stop drinking. Some of the steps call for people to admit that alcohol has taken over their lives and that only a higher power can restore their balance, acknowledge that drinking is wrong and ask God for forgiveness.

Denise Bertin-Epp, Brighton's president and chief nursing officer, said signing the letter of intent with Saudi Care is just the first step in the due diligence process that is expected to take about six months.

"At this point it sounds doable. We will go over to Saudi Arabia in a few months to make sure it is mutually beneficial," Bertin-Epp said. "This would mean an opportunity to extend our expertise to countries that need additional care."

If the management contract is signed, Bertin-Epp said Brighton would have to hire additional people to help with the project.



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"In the short term, we would need maybe a dozen people at the leadership level," she said. "We first want to make sure it is signed, sealed and delivered."

Construction on the \$60 million, 291,000-square-foot facility — to be named Saudi Care Brighton Hospital — is expected to begin in April after Brighton officials review the hospital's architectural and design plans, Al-Turaiki said.

The addiction-treatment center will feature 230 general inpatient beds, 20 intensive care beds and an emergency department. The hospital's 43 clinics will range from psychiatric to addiction, general medicine, cardiology, pediatric, dental and nutrition.

Al-Turaiki said the hospital will open during the first half of 2012. During 2011, Brighton executives are expected to help his company recruit and hire physicians, nurses, researchers and administrators to staff the facility, he said.

The hospital project has received approval from Saudi Crown Prince Sultan and will be financed by a 50 percent investment of the Saudi government, Al-Turaiki said. The remaining costs will be financed by a variety of international banks and private investors that could include Brighton Hospital, he said.

Accounting firm KPMG has been hired to conduct a feasibility and valuation report on the project that is nearly complete, Al-Turaiki said.

One factor that led Al-Turaiki to choose Brighton is its proprietary chemical dependency health record. The CDHR system was developed with Medical Communication Systems, Old Bridge, N.J., Bertin-Epp said.

Brighton developed the specialty electronic medical record system four years ago and has been using it the past three years, said Richard Kramer, president of the Brighton National Addiction Foundation, the fundraising arm of the hospital.

"We will develop the Saudi version of the health record," Kramer said.

Over the past decade, the numbers of Saudis and Muslims in the Gulf region who have become addicted to illicit drugs, narcotics and alcohol has tripled, Al-Turaiki said.

"It has become a serious problem," Al-Turaiki said. "The demand for a facility like we are building is very great."

The center also will treat conditions including obsessive compulsive and sleep disorders, phobias, depression and autism, he said. A pediatric clinic will treat adolescent psychological and organic conditions that include cerebral palsy and epilepsy, he said.

"We plan to serve the Islamic world, not just Saudi Arabia," Al-Turaiki said. "Brighton is our strategic partner and will help us build (five other) similar facilities."