

LincolnHealth Unification Q & A

1. **What exactly is MaineHealth?** MaineHealth is a not-for-profit healthcare system comprised of seven local health care systems (including LincolnHealth), a home health agency, a regional laboratory, and a behavioral health organization (all called its “members”). It serves southern, central, western and coastal Maine as well as Carroll County, N.H., caring for 1.1 million patients. Currently MaineHealth is organized under agreements with its members that call for shared decision making between local boards and a system Board of Trustees and a separate operating structure and budget for each member organization.
2. **What are the various MaineHealth Member boards of trustees considering?** They are considering unifying the member organizations of MaineHealth under a single governance and operating model while creating a system-wide Board of Trustees to oversee that model.
3. **Why is our board considering unification?** MaineHealth members initiated the discussions on unification last fall. Since then, we and the other members of MaineHealth have been discussing the pros and cons of unification in an effort to find a balance between the benefits of a unified model and the benefits of local decision making. Now want to include the full community in this discussion. The primary driver of the idea is the ability to deploy resources across MaineHealth based on need and better support struggling community hospitals. In our current structure, it is very difficult for resources to flow across the system, as each community must cover the costs of services delivered in that community.
4. **Has this decision already been made?** No. The LincolnHealth Board, along with all of the other member organization boards, have decided that the idea is worthy of discussion and input from the communities we serve. Over the summer of 2017, members of our board and senior managers will be meeting with community leaders, donors, civic organizations, and the public at large to engage in dialogue about creating a more unified governance and operating model for MaineHealth members. The decision to move forward, or not move forward, will most likely happen in the fall of 2017.
5. **What will happen to our current boards of trustees?** The newly-unified organization will still need local boards to perform many of the tasks they perform today. These include credentialing, monitoring quality of care, fundraising, input in determining community needs, planning, and in the budget process.
6. **What concerns have been expressed regarding unification?**
 - a. Diminished local input on services delivered locally
 - b. Loss of control over community assets
 - c. Having a larger more bureaucratic, less accountable and less nimble governing authority, one that lacks the capacity to “get things done;”

- d. The creation of a top-down, one-size fits all model that stifles local innovation in the name of reducing variations in care.
- e. Losing our local voice in a large system.

7. What are the potential benefits of unification?

- a. Greater financial stability for LincolnHealth over the long term.
- b. Access to care models that leverage the specialists and expertise at the state's largest tertiary care hospital, Maine Medical Center.
- c. Leveraging professional opportunities across MaineHealth to enhance our efforts to recruit local physicians.
- d. Less pressure to charge more for care in our market.
- e. An improved ability to provide services, such as eldercare, that do not pay for themselves.

8. If MaineHealth Members vote for unification, will our area lose any healthcare services (such as Emergency Care)? Over time, healthcare services come and go depending on improvements in technology and patient volume. Some of these changes will happen regardless of unification. Unification should help us keep vital services in our region even if they lose money because funds from the entire system can be directed to where they are needed.

9. Will this lead to people losing their jobs? No. There are no contemplated reductions in workforce as a result of unification.

10. Will this have an impact on the cost of care? Unification has the potential to lower our cost to care for our patients and residents because our patients depend, to an unusual degree, on Medicare and Medicaid, neither of which cover the full cost of providing care. Those costs have to be made up with higher charges to patients with private insurance and those who pay out of pocket. A unified system will make us part of a system with a healthier and younger mix of patients with public and private insurance, lessening the need to shift costs to private payers

11. Will there be changes in management and administration? There are no contemplated changes in management and administration at this time. Over time, as the system evolves, changes will be made to all MaineHealth member organizations in response to the changing healthcare landscape. Many of these changes, such as working together with our regional MaineHealth partners, are expected to take place with or without unification.

12. **Will fundraising be affected by unification?** All MaineHealth member organizations are committed to keeping fundraising efforts local, and this will be major focus of the local boards. Individual donors will still have the right to restrict their gifts to the local facility. Some donors may feel that the local facility isn't their hospital any more. We hope not. One of the goals of the current LincolnHealth Board of Trustees and other member boards across the system is for local communities to continue to have a strong sense of identity with their local hospitals and health systems.
13. **Will this change any of our plans to construct a new Health Center on the Miles campus?** No, not in any way. The new Health Center is a vital part of our local mission that is shared and supported by our colleagues across MaineHealth.