

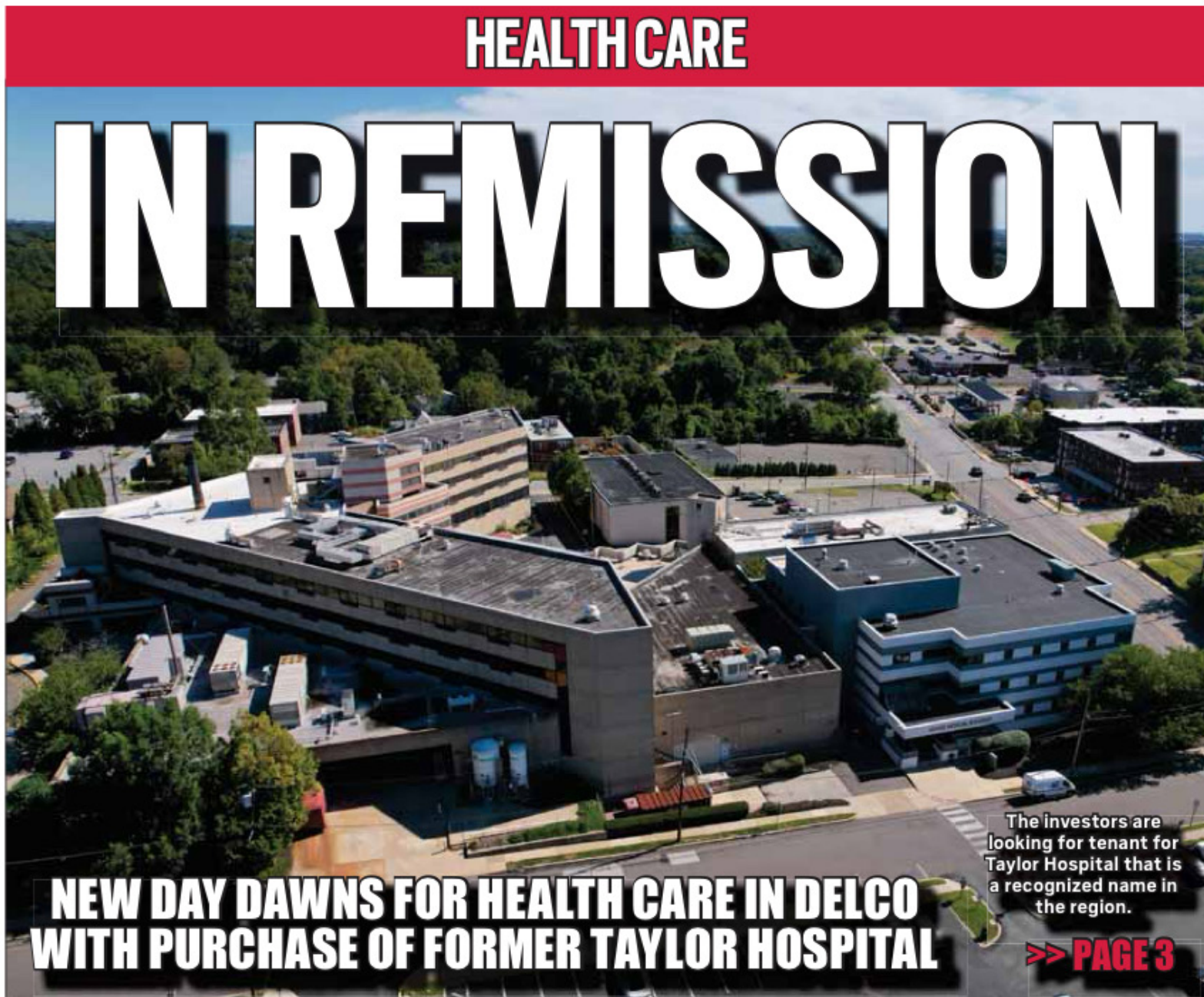
DAILY TIMES


**TODAY'S
WEATHER**
High: 81
Low: 60
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HEALTH CARE

IN REMISSION



**NEW DAY DAWNS FOR HEALTH CARE IN DELCO
WITH PURCHASE OF FORMER TAYLOR HOSPITAL**

The investors are looking for tenant for Taylor Hospital that is a recognized name in the region.

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RIDLEY PARK

New day dawns for Taylor Hospital

Local investors take ownership, seeking health care entity to reopen facility

By Kathleen E. Carey
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As the sun beamed upon them, a group of investors raised an American flag at Taylor Hospital on Tuesday as they took ownership of the property with an intent to make it a viable health care facility once again.

Amid bankruptcy proceedings, former owner Prospect Medical Holdings Inc. closed the Ridley Park hospital April 25, followed by Crozer-Chester Medical Center in Up-land a week later, creating a dearth of health care services in Delaware County, but particularly along the riverfront communities.

Tuesday was the day county residents took it back.

Todd Strine, whose family fortune was built on the indefatigable spirit of his bricklayer grandfather, quoted him, resounding the spirit of self-resilience, commitment and hope called upon in that moment and moving forward to bring back life-saving ser-



PHOTOS BY KATHLEEN E. CAREY — DAILY TIMES

Ridley Park Police Chief William Thomas, center, raising the flag Tuesday at Taylor Hospital with a group of local investors, who intend to reopen it as a hospital.

vices for the community.

Strine's grandfather, Walter Strine Sr., lived to be 100 years old after studying at Williamson College of the Trades and after World War II, brick by brick, converting old houses in Media into apartment houses that would eventually become the foundation for the Media Real Es-

tate company.

"As a bricklayer, he had a favorite expression: If it is to be, it's up to me," Strine said outside Taylor Hospital on Tuesday. "He said that to me throughout my life. What he really meant by that, I think, was not something selfish. I think he really was talking about responsibility ... That responsibility is what unites us to our mission. And our mission here is really clear."

Strine along with local investors Jason Kilpatrick, Danny Platt, Justin Misner, Sumeer Toteja and another Delaware County entrepreneur, who wants to remain anonymous, purchased the 165,000-square-foot facility at 175 E. Chester Pike in Ridley Park for \$1 million. Strine said the sale has been approved by the

bankruptcy court.

For two years, the site will be taxed at a \$1 million assessment, then, it will be reassessed. Strine explained that all of the former tax issues were settled as a part of this transaction.

The investors, most of whom have direct connections to health care entities, are now casting a large net to bring a viable health care provider to the facility, which they will continue to own as a for-profit entity. With no set date to reopen Taylor, both the investors and public officials have said there is interest from health care operators.

Strine is chief financial officer and owner of Keystone Quality Transport and has worked with Platt, CEO of Keystone and Misner, COO of Keystone, for well over a decade. They grew Keystone Quality Transport, which was founded in Media in 1994, into a fleet of more than 250 vehicles serving Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Washington, performing over 250,000 transports annually.

"We're going to take the success that we've had in the medical transport business and we're going to apply it to this challenge," Strine said. "We're Delaware County's ambulance company. We're homegrown. We've been around for more than 30 years. Who better to do something like this in Delco than Delco's homegrown am-



Out in front of Taylor Hospital on Tuesday, from left, Todd Strine, Dane Collins of Ridley Park, Jason Kilpatrick and Brian Corson. Collins is the president of the borough council.

balance company?"

Strine said Taylor's buying price may sound cheap but doesn't include what it will take to invest in it and care for it.

"Because we have a smaller investment initially, it gives us way more flexibility to be able to make good deals with tenants that we want to see here," he said. "If we get a tenant that we really want to see here, we'll bend over backwards to not squeeze every last dollar out of it, to make it a win-win."

The project is apparently not without its naysayers.

"Everybody's telling me, 'Oh, it's so hard to turn it around. So many hospitals have closed across the country,'" Strine noted. "All of that is true but I don't believe that this hospital closed because of some of the structural reasons that others have closed ... The primary thing is can we bring health care services and jobs back to Ridley Park? I really got to believe that we can. That's why we're doing this."

'Let's go see it'

He explained the investor group, sponsored by Keystone Quality Transport, chose to buy Taylor Hospital because it was going to be abandoned after Prospect Medical Holdings only received an expression of interest for an entity willing to pay \$575,000 for it.

"I said, 'Well, let's go see it,'" Strine said. "I realized that what is here, in my opinion, is a great building in a great community for health care."

Plus, he added, "It was obviously worth more than \$575,000 so we said, 'Look, we'll buy it for \$1 million as long as we can settle all of these tax disputes and give us some breathing room to find a tenant that's going to make it more valuable.'"

As they called Tuesday "Day 1 of the Turnaround," the investors joined elected officials and first responders in the flag raising at Taylor Hospital.

"We raise the flag as a sym-



The group of local investors who purchased Taylor Hospital with the intent to reopen it, stand with local elected officials and first responders with unity of purpose.

New day

FROM PAGE 3

bol of the unity that it's going to take to accomplish this task together," Strine said. "If it is to be, it's up to each and every one of us."

Then, Strine asked for a moment of silence for all those who had been born and all those who had died at the hospital.

"Gramps would have absolutely loved this project," Strine said. "He was all about taking things that people no longer had a use for and making them useful again. I think it was because of that bricklayer's sense of responsibility

"If it is to be, it's up to each and every one of us to pull together as a community as we have done to get to this point," he continued. "What we have accomplished so far is the creation of an opportunity that can do a lot of good for a lot of people. We have a tremendous opportunity to set a model for how to fix something."

Collaborative approach

Strine applauded both Ridley Park Borough Council President Dane Collins, a Republican, and Delaware County Council Chair Dr. Monica Taylor, a Democrat, for their leadership, resulting in the purchase and the opportunity for Taylor to start over.

"I think this is a perfect example of how to work across the aisle and unite people," Strine said. "It's not about politics. It's about health."

Taylor said a collaborative approach is integral in this situation.

"I think this was a team effort and it has been all along," she said. "How we go about rebuilding health care in Delaware County, it's about bringing people like Todd to the table. It's those types of partnerships."

She said she was excited for Strine and looking forward to working with him and health



PHOTOS BY KATHLEEN E. CAREY — DAILY TIMES

Jason Kilpatrick, left, speaks with fellow investors, Danny Platt and Justin Misner, on the day they took over the Taylor Hospital building, planning to reopen it as a health care facility.

care partners interested in operating in the county.

"Some of the hold up was Prospect holding up the sale," Taylor noted, adding that the sooner the California-based for-profit company leaves Delaware County, the better off the county will be.

Collins spoke to some of the ways Ridley Park has struggled the last few years.

"We've had issues with bridges," he said. "We've had pandemics. We've had a hospital close. We've had financial difficulties due to the hospital closing. With this opportunity comes an opportunity to right a lot of those wrongs and start to heal this community and the surrounding communities that use this hospital."

He shared his perspective on the hospital purchase.

"We got word that this hospital was going to be going up for sale," Collins said, "and immediately, I started to look for a buyer, somebody that could potentially step in and help this."

He reached out to his friend, Jason "Scrapper" Kilpatrick.

How it unfolded

In the meantime, he said they learned that some major buyers had dropped out and that Todd Strine was interested.

"I called Jason and said, 'Hey, do you know Todd Strine? I think he's trying to

buy this hospital. Let's get on a phone call with him,'" Collins said. So, they did.

At first, Kilpatrick was hesitant.

"I already have like 190 properties, I didn't know if I wanted a hospital," he said. "I was like, 'How much more do I want on my plate?'"

Then, he chose to trust the process.

"I was like of like, 'Let me just ride with this and let the universe dictate where it's going to go,'" Kilpatrick said.

Then, ChristianaCare lost interest in buying it.

"When I heard my friend Todd was involved, I was like, 'Wait. Wow,'" Kilpatrick said as he recalled his conversation with him. "I was in Ocean City on the beach and I'm on vacation and I was like, 'You're interested in that too?'"

"And, he was like, 'Why don't we work together?'" Kilpatrick said. "Then, I saw an opportunity. When you save lives, how that gives back and that's what this is about. This is not about spreadsheets and swagger. This is about lives."

Kilpatrick said the first time he went to look at Taylor Hospital, he rollerbladed through the halls to check it out. On Tuesday, he walked around the property with a stick and an orange Home Depot bucket picking up trash.

"It's nice 'cause being this

is my hometown makes it more powerful to come here and do meaningful work and it's more so to open these doors up and get the doctors in here and the nurses and the miracles that they can perform," he said. "It's not about us. This is the easy part. The next part is the big deal."

'Fix a huge problem'

Collins was grateful for this particular investor group.

"It's just awesome, somebody I know and can trust," he said. "The community needs it, the surrounding area needs it, it is... hopefully a model on how local entrepreneurs (and) local government can work together to fix a huge problem... I really do believe this is the start of something good and new for this area and I think we got the two right guys behind it."

Brian Corson, founder of MVP Recovery, attended the flag raising and in full support.

"As we are in health care here in Delaware County, we've seen the devastation that it's caused," he said of the Crozer closures. "We're seeing it at the front lines at MVP. The hospital closures affected the most vulnerable of our population. We're talking about kids, elderly, those with behavioral health issues, those with chronic illnesses. And we're seeing that individuals don't have the means or the resources to get to ...

these other hospitals on other ends of the county or in other states."

It also spills over into regular care.

"We're seeing a crisis when it comes to individuals finding primary care providers that had been using Crozer providers for years and years especially throughout the city of Chester and down and around this area," Corson said.

He expressed his view on the matter at hand.

"I feel like the thing they didn't realize is you come in here and you push Delaware County around, Delco pushes back," Corson said. "Prospect, they bankrupted our health care system. What's more powerful than greed is community and it's the community coming together and building this hospital back."

Strine said the purchase presents a different perspective.

"This gives us a chance to be able to talk to our customers in a very different way because now we can bring them an entirely different opportunity," he said.

What is next?

Noting their openness to all possibilities, Strine added, "We want to do the deal that is the fastest, the easiest, and the most reputable operator. We want to get a name brand operator in there. And, we think that this place deserves a name brand operator. The community is great."

He also held hope for former Crozer Health employees, particularly those who worked at Taylor Hospital.

"I'd love to see them all come back," Strine said. "There's no question that some of the greatest people in health care in Delaware County worked out of this facility. A lot of them are my neighbors. They would love to come back here."

Corson said he can't wait to see #delcostrong and #taylorstrong.

"Everyone thought it was over and this Delco crew said, 'It's not over till it's over.' And here we are," he said. "A lot of other people would've been like, 'Oh, that's not possible.' That wasn't even something that crossed the lips of (these guys)."

Kilpatrick said family in other states called upon hearing his involvement.

"My uncle called me from New Jersey, saying, 'I was born in Taylor Hospital. Thank you! I'm so proud of you!'" Kilpatrick said.

He asked the community for help with maintaining the positive energy and with finding a provider.

"If they know a decision maker in the community in hospitals, have them reach out to us," Kilpatrick said. "Doors were closed and now, they're open. You think about the ER workers who work in the emergency room, how fast they have to make decisions to save someone's life. Those guys are the heroes. We're just trying to put it round the platter for them to get them back in here."

Strine agreed, saying they're ready to show the facility to prospective operators.

"We're open for business," he said. "We want them to come take tours. We'll show them all through and then, they can use their vision and their real estate departments to make the place what they want."

"All we want to do is bring health care services back," he said. "If we are able to do that, then, we have done a lot of good for a lot of people."



Brian Corson, founder of MVP Recovery, in December 2022. He says the closure of the Crozer Health hospitals has been major blow to residents who need mental health treatment.