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## UC counters offers to doctors

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The wooing of Alliance Primary Care doctors by different hospitals has accelerated with a new offer from the University of Cincinnati.

Dangling a guaranteed \$50,000 incentive to be paid out over the first year, UC has invited about 110 APC doctors to join its own UC Physicians.

About 43 of the doctors practice at Jewish Hospital and have gotten a similar offer to join Mercy Health Partners when Mercy buys Jewish. Mercy's offer included a \$50,000 bonus if doctors signed by Oct. 31, a deadline that since has been extended for a month.

UC's vision includes a new primary-care group that includes the Alliance Primary Care doctors, plus a hospital system anchored by University Hospital, West Chester Medical Center and the University Pointe medical complex.

It wrote doctors Oct. 30 with the official offer for a three-year-contract, calling it the "next iteration of Alliance Primary Care." It also can offer faculty appointments for doctors who would want extra teaching or research.

After the first year, the \$50,000 "quality incentive payment" would be tied to productivity.

"What we're trying to do is keep a network of primary-care doctors together and hopefully to link them to a system," said David Stern, vice president for Health Affairs at UC.

The bidding over doctors comes as the Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati fractures. Once the region's biggest hospital system, the group includes University, Jewish and Fort Hamilton hospitals, West Chester Medical Center, the Drake Center and Alliance Primary Care.

Both Jewish and Fort Hamilton are withdrawing. Mercy's has agreed to buy Jewish Hospital for \$180 million and wants to keep as many of the doctors that currently practice there as it can.

Gayla Harvey, senior vice president of Alliance Primary Care, said doctors want to keep the group together.

"The breakup of APC is not necessary for the hospitals to go their separate ways," she said.

Alliance Primary Care includes 142 doctors overall. The UC offer excludes about 30 who are part of Greater Cincinnati Associated Physicians and suing APC to get out of the system.

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