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NEWS RELEASE

Aldersgate to hold ribbon cutting on Oct. 19 for Asbury Health and Rehabilitation Center – a place where residents are in charge of how their days are structured *Campus revolution nearly complete*

Charlotte, N.C., (Oct. 3, 2017) – Aldersgate’s expansion will reach a major milestone on Oct. 19 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the opening of its new state-of-the-art, 125-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation center. Asbury Health and Rehabilitation Center at Aldersgate, which officially opens late Oct., replaces the current Asbury Care Center, Aldersgate’s existing 100-bed facility. The physical therapy suite alone occupies 3,500 square feet of the new center – *double* the size of what the old facility offered. Beyond the therapy suite is an outdoor therapy garden designed to be a true-to-life “front yard” experience that prepares patients for safe navigation when they return home. Patients also enjoy the benefits of horticultural therapy in this natural space. The entire skilled-care facility is 140,000 square feet.

The completion of the skilled nursing facility fulfills part of Aldersgate’s Gateway Promise, the growth plan that maximizes the community’s 231-acre campus and invigorates east Charlotte in a way that positively impacts youth, family, senior living and elder care.

Board Chair Thomas R. Lawing, President/CEO Suzanne Pugh, Chief Operating Officer Jeff Weatherhead, Director of Health Services Joe Yoon and Chaplain Karen Moore will take part in the Oct. 19th ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. The ceremony will be followed by tours of the new facility. **The media is invited to attend.**

Nowhere is Aldersgate’s new philosophy on elder care more evident than at the skilled-care facility. In most skilled-nursing facilities, everyone is on the same schedule – whether it suits the resident or not. In the new Aldersgate model, residents (and their families) decide when to take meals, when to bathe or shower, when to socialize and when to spend time alone.

Research has shown that senior patients have better health outcomes in home-like environments. “Clinical care doesn’t have to be delivered in an institutional setting,” said Aldersgate CEO Suzanne Hodge Pugh. “Our goal is to provide state-of-the-art care in a warm, familiar and comfortable environment that feels like home. It’s a highly customized approach that puts the patient and his or her family in charge.”

High-water mark

Elders facing recovery after illness or injury will have something special to aid in their healing. A distinctive HydroWorx® aquatic therapy pool is equipped with an underwater treadmill and wheelchair.

The chair moves the patient into a position that allows him to float onto the treadmill where he is led by a physical therapist through a series of therapeutic non-weight-bearing exercises.

HydroWorx's patented underwater treadmill is integrated seamlessly into the pool floor. By taking advantage of the body's buoyancy in water, a HydroWorx pool eliminates from 20 to 90 percent of an individual's body weight. That means that, in collarbone-deep water, a 200-pound patient will bear only 20 pounds while in the aquatic therapy pool. This, in conjunction with therapeutic warm water, allows for substantially decreased joint compression and pain.

The therapy pool may help speed up the rehabilitation process. Gait training in a low-impact environment (like a warm pool) yields faster results than the old standard of therapy, which involved postponing rehab until pain-free, land-based training was possible. Cardiovascular stamina, muscle toning and flexibility are augmented by the resistance water provides.

Range of motion is not only improved in the HydroWorx pool, but it's captured and recorded via underwater cameras. Once improvements in range of motion are documented, the service becomes reimbursable through both private insurance and Medicare.

HydroWorx 2000 and some of the other innovative rehab tools and approaches are so effective that Aldersgate leaders are making them available to non-residents. "Home in Just 10 Days"TM is a new, multidisciplinary transitional rehab program at Asbury Health and Rehabilitation Center that works to get post-op patients home and safe as quickly as possible. This initiative offers personalized care during a short-stay recovery that may result in faster recuperation time.

People who have had joint-replacement surgery or been hospitalized for surgeries and illnesses are likely candidates for the program. Those with conditions such as diabetes, dementia, cancer and more – that may complicate the post-surgical healing process – may also benefit from short-stay, transitional rehab. "The ultimate goal is to return patients to the comfort of their own homes as quickly as possible," said Pugh. "That may be fewer than 10 days, or it may be longer – depending on individual factors."

Asbury is a preferred provider for Novant Health, OrthoCarolina, Carolinas HealthCare System and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Facility

The patient is boss

Construction began in late 2016 on the skilled nursing and post-acute care rehabilitation center that increases the former Asbury Center capacity by 25 percent. The center's environment is entirely client-centric. The clinical staff offers highly individualized care that is an appealing alternative to today's standard – and often institutional – nursing home environments.

Elders often have great reservations and fear about being placed into a skilled nursing facility. (It's often not *their* choice to go.) The Aldersgate culture establishes this offering as a resource – not an institution. "This is a *home* where we encourage each resident to achieve his or her highest quality of life," Pugh said. "And we do everything we can to ensure it."

Even the floor plan at the new center is revolutionary. It includes six "households," with 20 residences in each. An additional five transitional rooms that mirror assisted living are also available. Social gathering

spaces – like living, dining and sun rooms, screened porches and courtyards – are part of the design, as are all private bedrooms with full private European-style baths.

Each household contains similar populations. For example, short-term rehab patients comprise one household, while patients with longer-term, more chronic needs live in another. These households have two big benefits. They support interpersonal, social relationships, and they allow for greater care effectiveness.

Care plans combine each patient's preferences – a radical concept for a retirement community – with required clinical care needs.

Residents decide, with input from their families, how their days will flow. Schedules are arranged to reflect a resident's choices for waking, dressing, bathing, eating, exercising, physical therapy and socializing. Such cultural changes require new practices that dramatically reduce invasive institutional nursing standards. For example, a nurse "tucks a patient in" and lets him sleep during the night without waking him for night checks every two hours – which is the typical nursing home practice. Aldersgate nurses carry small flashlights to check on sleeping patients without having to interrupt their sleep.

Aldersgate's reputation for clinical care excellence is well-known. Many elders served in the Aldersgate post-acute care center are, in fact, from *outside* Aldersgate's campus. Aldersgate admits, treats and successfully discharges Charlotte-area seniors who need specialized rehab following a hospitalization or surgical procedure.

As part of the new building, Aldersgate has partnered with Fresenius, a well-known dialysis provider, to develop a new 10-seat dialysis center. This can better serve elders staying at Asbury who need this treatment, as well as serve residents from the larger community through outpatient dialysis services. East Charlotte residents include a disproportionately high number of people needing dialysis treatment. The schedule will accommodate patients and dramatically reduce the burden on the residents who will no longer need to be transported to other locations.

Through a continuing partnership with Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region, Asbury Health and Rehab offers expanded hospice beds and support. HPCCR has developed a six-bed inpatient area within the center itself, housed in a private part of the building and with its own entrance, to serve those from the greater community.

About Aldersgate

Founded in 1943 as The Methodist Home – a home for retired Methodist ministers – Aldersgate is a nonprofit Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) with a legacy of nearly 70 years of caring for seniors. Today, about 350 seniors call Aldersgate home and have access to all levels of care on the wooded, 231-acre campus. The new Gateway Promise expansion campaign will also create space for about 100 more seniors in new residential villas, currently under construction. Aldersgate derives its name from the street in London where Methodist Church founder John Wesley experienced the "confirmation of his salvation by the grace of God." The community is on Charlotte's east side at 3800 Shamrock Drive. Learn more at aldersgateccrc.com

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