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# Mayo joint venture focuses effort on rural hospitals

• Consulting business will sell treatment and training programs.

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Dr. Mark Lindsay's bright idea got its start in the late 1990s at a hospital in Eau Claire, Wis.

That's when the Mayo Clinic pulmonologist began working on a comprehensive approach to help patients get free of ventilators and recover more quickly after an accident or surgery.

The approach, which Lindsay fine-tuned and expanded to 11 rural hospitals in the Midwest, now forms the cornerstone of a new joint-venture business announced Thursday by the Mayo Clinic that will take the model to remote hospitals across the country.

The Rochester-based hospital system is teaming up with Select Medical, the nation's largest provider of acute care and medical rehabilitation hospitals, in a 50-50 partnership to launch a consulting business for rural hospitals and skilled nursing homes that it said will combine the medical expertise of the Mayo Clinic with the operational know-how of Select Medical.

"There are 1,300 rural hospitals, and we're in 11," Lindsay said. "We already know there are significant disparities of health care in rural communities. This is a way to add resources and revenues and help keep the doors open."

The new business, Allevant Solutions, will sell comprehensive treatment and training programs that can be used for people on ventilators or recovering from other illnesses, including brain injuries, heart surgery and loss of limbs.

The company will "provide a template" that Lindsay said already has helped patients in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa get high-quality care close to home and avoid costly readmissions. Additionally, it has helped local hospitals draw in patients, better manage their bed loads and help recruit and retain doctors and nurses.

Lindsay's early work on the ventilator program in Eau Claire with about 200 patients resulted in almost half of them coming off the ventilator and going home, offering better outcomes at lower cost, he said.

In 2001, he began work on a similar recovery program for patients not on ventilators. With early success, Lindsay went back to school to develop his idea even further, earning an MBA in 2004.

The Mayo Clinic has a history of taking ideas it develops in its clinics and partnering with outside entities to expand. Any profits from Allevant Solutions will get re-invested in research or education, according to Mayo officials.

Allevant, which will be based in Mechanicsburg, Pa., where Select Medical is based, is expected to add more than a dozen new employees in the first few years.

Most of the new jobs will be created at rural hospitals, Lindsay predicted, noting that when the programs launched in the Wisconsin communities of Osseo and Bloomer, patient days doubled and more staff was needed for respiratory care and speech therapy.

Select Medical operates 110 hospitals specializing in long-term acute care as well as 12 rehab hospitals and nearly 1,000 outpatient physical therapy clinics.

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Dr. Mark Lindsay