



PRESS RELEASE

**BETHLEN COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCES INTERIM CEO, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LAUNCHES NATIONAL SEARCH**

(LIGONIER, PA) Sept. 1, 2021- Ligonier-based senior care and retirement community, [Bethlen Communities](#), announced today that Ned Laubacher has been named the organization’s interim CEO while the board – comprised of both local and national healthcare and business leaders – launches a regional and national executive search. Former CEO Heather Lincoln’s resignation was accepted by the board earlier last week.

“During one of the most difficult times in Bethlen’s modern history, Heather worked alongside The Hill Group to bring an integral community asset into financial stabilization and ensure patients received quality, compassionate care during the pandemic. On behalf of patients, families and Bethlen’s dedicated staff, we thank her for her service and wish her well,” said Laubacher, whose extensive healthcare background includes steering hospitals, health systems, and boards, including Allegheny Valley Hospital, Forbes Regional Hospital, St. Joseph Home Health and Hospice, among other healthcare and mission-driven organizations.

In February 2020, The Hill Group, a leading management consulting firm, led a robust financial, operational and governance transformation. The effort included a series of immediate changes in financial management and internal processes that set Bethlen on a stronger trajectory, ensuring both reinvestment and long-term sustainability. As the organization, which is the area’s largest local employer, prepares for a 100-year celebration this fall, its “turnaround to transformation” is still underway.

“Having led their organizational turnaround, The Hill Group deeply understands Bethlen’s operations. During this leadership transition, it makes practical sense to enlist their most experienced healthcare-based consultant as interim CEO,” said Matt Blistan, Bethlen’s interim board chair. “While his skill sets are in demand nationally, we are thrilled that he has agreed to focus solely on Bethlen during this transition.”

Ned has over 30 years’ experience in health care, and his rich history in caring for patients includes serving as CEO of a community hospital, CEO for several outpatient service companies, COO for PricewaterhouseCoopers’ healthcare consulting practice, senior executive for health systems, and start-up CEO for early-stage companies tackling rapid bacterial diagnosis and wound care.

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The board of directors will vote this month to initiate a regional and national search with the goal of announcing a permanent CEO by January 2022.

“During the pandemic, Bethlen evolved its care profile to serve more than patients’ physical needs, offering emotional, spiritual and physical wellness programs that help people at all stages of life – exemplifying its reputation as an innovation-minded leader in the healthcare industry,” said board member Kim Kramer. “It’s a unique time in senior healthcare management and Bethlen has emerged as more than just a brick-and-mortar senior care community set in one of the region’s most scenic destinations. We see this leadership transition as a great opportunity to recruit a CEO who will take this progress to new heights.”

Bethlen is now in a stronger position following two years of a turnaround effort centered around matching its operating efficiency to its established clinical excellence. To ensure long-term organizational oversight, The Hill Group’s governance overhaul included a restructuring of the board’s bylaws and procedures aligned with best practices in nonprofit management. In contrast to the former board, which lacked representation from the local community, five of the nine board members represent the Ligonier and local communities. Combined, the new board members’ qualifications equate to a board with a multidisciplinary range of capabilities in healthcare, finance, real estate, clinical quality, and human resources.

- Matt Blistan, National Vice President, GBU Financial Life
- Patrick Cendes, President of Real Estate, Totteridge Properties LLC
- Lehel Deak, Physician Assistant, NYC H+H Morrisania
- Elaine Hatfield, Senior Director of Quality, Education, and Compliance (Retired), UPMC Senior Communities
- Kim Kramer, President, Legacy Wealth Solutions
- Reverend Judit Mayer, Minister, Hungarian Reformed Church
- Bill Malloy, CEO, ROAM Holdings
- Reverend Les (Leslie) Martin, Hungarian Reformed Church

About Bethlen Communities

For 100 years, Bethlen has provided compassionate care for Ligonier Valley’s most vulnerable residents. Rooted in charity, its story begins with compassion when hundreds of orphaned children found their new home there after a deadly mine disaster. Today, Bethlen honors its humble beginnings by nurturing nearly 2,000 seniors through their comprehensive wellness

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services that honor all stages of aging. Anchored by its Graceful Aging Wellness Center, a state-of-the-art facility that provides in-person and virtual classes to keep members' bodies, brains and spirit nurtured, its village includes a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center; a personal care home that encourages supportive, independent living; hospice care that ensures each individual's last chapter is filled with spirit; and, independent living cottages that offer a world renowned view of the scenic Laurel Highlands. Its nurses and caregivers also provide nursing and rehabilitation services, including hospice home health and companion care that gives people the opportunity to live joyfully in their homes.

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