

BJC Health System CEO Rich Liekweg Announces Retirement

Nick Barto, BJC Health System president, named as successor

ST. LOUIS, MO, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [BJC Health System](#) today announced that CEO Rich Liekweg will retire effective October 1, 2025, concluding an extraordinary career spanning almost 40 years in health care — the last 16 of which were devoted to BJC Health System, headquartered in St. Louis, MO.

“It has been an honor to serve and lead our team members these past 16 years as they deliver exceptional care to our patients and communities,” said Rich Liekweg, BJC Health System CEO. “Together, we successfully navigated through unprecedented times in the industry, never losing sight of our singular purpose to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve. I am deeply proud of our caregivers, the culture we have created, and the values we share that place the patient at the center of all we do.”

Liekweg joined BJC in 2009 as president of Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Barnes-Jewish West County Hospital and served as group president of BJC HealthCare. He was later named executive vice president and then president of BJC HealthCare in 2015. In 2018, he became CEO of BJC Health System.

Under Liekweg’s visionary leadership, BJC has grown to be one of the largest nonprofit academic health systems in the United States and a powerful economic engine that helps lift the entire Midwest region. BJC’s 47,000 caregivers care for more than a million patients each year across 24 hospitals and more than 250 clinics and service centers located throughout Missouri, southern Illinois, and eastern Kansas.



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Today, BJC's influence extends beyond its state borders as an adult and pediatric academic health system advancing the frontier of care and treatments, a rural health innovator working to provide world-class care to even the region's most remote patients, a safety-net provider helping ensure everyone who needs care gets care, and a trusted community partner investing more than \$1.2 billion annually in community benefit to improve lives for those in communities it serves.

During Liekweg's tenure, BJC Health System successfully extended its 45-year affiliation agreement with Washington University and its School of Medicine — one of the nation's most prestigious research universities and medical schools. In 2024, he oversaw the integration of Saint Luke's Health System of Kansas City, expanding BJC's reach across the state of Missouri and into Kansas. And earlier this month, BJC announced an agreement between CoxHealth in Springfield and St. Louis Children's Hospital to expand pediatric care throughout Southwest Missouri in conjunction with the pediatric specialists at WashU Medicine.



BJC Health System Board of Directors has 2 appointed Nick Barto, current BJC Health System president, to succeed Rich Liekweg as president and CEO effective October 1.

"Rich's impact on BJC and on health care as a whole has been nothing short of remarkable," said Greg Bentz, Chair of the BJC Health System board of directors. "His strategic vision, steady leadership, and deep commitment to our mission will leave a lasting legacy for years to come." Following a comprehensive succession planning process, the BJC Health System Board of Directors has appointed Nick Barto, current BJC Health System president, to succeed Liekweg as president and CEO effective October 1.

"Nick's 30-plus years of health care and operations experience – including many leading complex, integrated health care systems – make him uniquely qualified to lead BJC through this next chapter of our storied history," Bentz continued. "His commitment to growth, innovation, creating a vibrant culture, and making strategic investments to improve the vitality of the diverse communities we serve reflect the values that are synonymous with BJC."

Barto joined BJC in 2018 as chief financial officer. He was named president of BJC Health System in 2023. In addition to his role as system president, Barto was named president of the East Region in 2024. He has been instrumental in successfully steering the organization through significant industry headwinds—including the COVID-19 pandemic—and in spearheading many of BJC's noteworthy growth initiatives. He previously held senior leadership positions at Catholic Health Initiatives, Novant Health, and at several financial services organizations all focused on the health care industry.

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“I am honored to be selected to succeed Rich Liekweg as BJC Health System's President and CEO,” said Barto. “I look forward to working with our 47,000 team members to build on Rich's vision that grew BJC into a super-regional health care leader, to continue to provide extraordinary care to the communities we serve, and to position BJC as a mission-oriented academic health care leader for all future generations.”

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About BJC Health System

BJC Health System is one of the largest integrated

academic health care organizations in the United States and the largest private employer in the state of Missouri. It serves as a driving force for economic growth, clinical excellence and exceptional patient care throughout the Midwest and beyond. Headquartered in St. Louis, MO, BJC and its 47,000 employees operate in two regions as BJC HealthCare in the East and Saint Luke's in the West. Its dedication to improving urban, suburban and rural communities across Missouri, southern Illinois and eastern Kansas is supported by more than \$1.2 billion in annual community investment. BJC's long-standing affiliation with the nationally-renowned Washington University in St. Louis and its School of Medicine powers its academic mission in the East, most notably at U.S. News & World Report ranked Barnes-Jewish Hospital and St. Louis Children's Hospital; as well as at the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center, the only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center in the state of Missouri. In the West region, Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City serves as the primary training site for UMKC School of Medicine. BJC is consistently recognized as a great place to work, from Newsweek's 'America's Greatest Workplaces' to Forbes' list of 'Best Large Employers.'

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