

# Owner of Weiss, West Suburban hospitals files for bankruptcy amid sale

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The owner of Weiss and West Suburban hospitals has filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy — Owner of Weiss, West Suburban hospitals files for bankruptcy

Pipeline Health System, a for-profit health system based in California, filed for bankruptcy relief Sunday in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Texas. It has owned Weiss in Uptown and West Suburban in Oak Park since 2019.

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Pipeline said in a news release that it plans to “continue to operate under the normal course of business during the Chapter 11 proceedings,” keeping its hospitals open. Pipeline said it will continue to pay salaries. Weiss has 650 employees and West Suburban has 867 employees, according to Pipeline.

“We intend for the restructuring process to allow our hospitals to remain open and operating in their communities, while putting the hospital system in a more secure and sustainable financial position going forward,” said Pipeline CEO Andrei Soran, in the news release.

He said patients do not need to reschedule appointments.

The bankruptcy is a result of challenges including rising labor and supply costs, lower revenues and delayed payments from some insurance plans, Pipeline said.

The news comes just months after the state Health Facilities and Services Review Board approved Pipeline’s plans to sell Weiss and West Suburban for \$92 million to Resilience Healthcare, a newly created, for-profit company led by Manoj Prasad, who has said he’s spent much of his career helping to turn around health care facilities.

Pipeline said in a news release it plans to continue “to pursue all available options to complete the planned sale” of the hospitals to Resilience.

“If the buyer is unable to close the sale, Pipeline plans to undertake a marketing process to identify other potential buyers,” Pipeline said.

A spokeswoman for Pipeline declined to comment on a possible timeline for closing the sale, or “factors leading to the delay.”

Mark Silberman, an attorney with law firm Benesch representing Resilience, said “we remain hopeful and optimistic we’ll be able to position ourselves to provide care to the community.”

Pipeline has a fraught history with its Chicago area hospitals.

In 2019, Pipeline angered community members and leaders, shortly after it bought the two hospitals and Westlake Hospital in Melrose Park. Pipeline initially **said it would turn around** the three facilities, but **instead said it would close Westlake** just weeks after taking ownership, sparking fears that it had similar plans for Weiss and West Suburban.

Those worries were **stoked recently** when Pipeline agreed to sell a Weiss parking lot to a developer hoping to build apartments on the site.

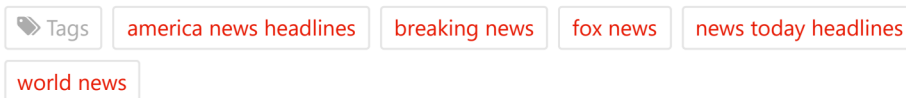
Pipeline also owns four hospitals in the Los Angeles area and a hospital in Dallas, Texas.

*More to come.*



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# The fountain of life: Water droplets hold the secret ingredient for building life

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Purdue University chemists have uncovered a mechanism for peptide-forming reactions to occur in water—something that has puzzled scientists for decades.

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“This is essentially the **chemistry** behind the **origin of life**,” said Graham Cooks, the Henry Bohn Hass Distinguished Professor of Analytical Chemistry in Purdue’s College of Science. “This is the first demonstration that primordial molecules, simple amino acids, spontaneously form peptides, the building blocks of life, in droplets of pure **water**. This is a dramatic discovery.”

This water-based chemistry, which leads to proteins and so to life on Earth, could also lead to the faster development of drugs to treat humanity’s most debilitating diseases. The team’s discovery was published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

For decades scientists have theorized that life on Earth began in the oceans. The chemistry, however, remained an enigma. Raw amino acids—something that meteorites delivered to early Earth daily—can react and latch together to form peptides, the building blocks of proteins and, eventually, life. Puzzlingly, the process requires the loss of a water molecule, which seems highly unlikely in a wet, aqueous or oceanic environment. For life to form, it needed water. But it also needed space away from the water.

Cooks, an expert in **mass spectrometry** and early Earth chemistry, and his team have uncovered the answer to the riddle: “Water isn’t wet everywhere.” On the margins, where the water droplet meets the atmosphere, incredibly rapid reactions can take place, transforming abiotic amino acids into the building blocks of life. Places where sea spray flies into the air and waves pound the land, or where **fresh water** burbles down a slope, were fertile landscapes for life’s potential evolution.

The chemists have spent more than 10 years using **mass spectrometers** to study **chemical reactions** in droplets containing water.

“The rates of reactions in droplets are anywhere from a hundred to a million times faster than the same chemicals reacting in bulk solution,” Cooks said.

The rates of these reactions make catalysts unnecessary, speeding up the reactions and, in the case of early Earth chemistry, making the evolution of life possible. Understanding how this process works has been the goal of decades of scientific research. The secret of how life arose on Earth can help scientists understand why it happened and inform the search for life on other planets, or



even moons.

Understanding how amino acids built themselves up into proteins and, eventually, life-forms revolutionizes scientists' understanding of chemical synthesis. That same chemistry could now aid synthetic chemists in speeding the reactions critical to discovering and developing new drugs and therapeutic treatments for diseases.

"If you walk through an academic campus at night, the buildings with the lights on are where synthetic chemists are working," Cooks said. "Their experiments are so slow that they run for days or weeks at a time. This isn't necessary, and using droplet chemistry, we have built an apparatus, which is being used at Purdue now, to speed up the synthesis of novel chemicals and potential new drugs."

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Scientists discover new 'origins of life' chemical reactions

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**More information:**

Holden, Dylan T. et al, Aqueous microdroplets enable abiotic synthesis and chain extension of unique peptide isomers from free amino acids, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2022). DOI: [10.1073/pnas.2212642119](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2212642119).  
[doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2212642119](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2212642119)

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**Citation:**

The fountain of life: Water droplets hold the secret ingredient for building life (2022, October 3)

retrieved 3 October 2022

from <https://phys.org/news/2022-10-fountain-life-droplets-secret-ingredient.html>

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