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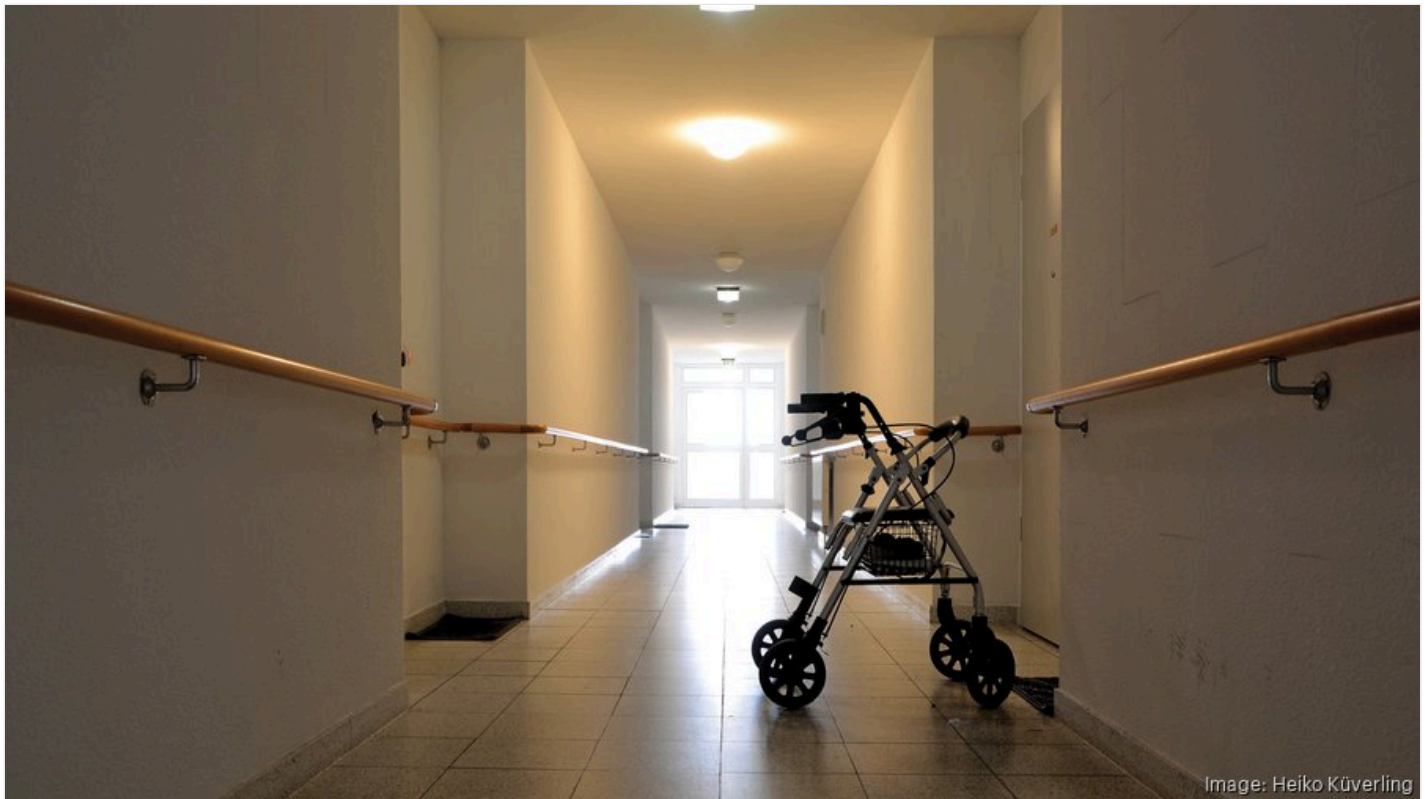
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## **Health care group offloads dozens of Florida facilities ahead of \$1.2B bankruptcy**




LaVie's financial troubles were attributed to labor shortages that began during the pandemic and forced reliance on staffing agencies.

HEIKO119



By **Christina Georgacopoulos** – Reporter, Tampa Bay Business Journal  
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An Atlanta-based assisted living group that once ranked among the largest nursing home operators in Florida filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy with nearly \$1.2 billion in debt.

LaVie Care Centers Chief Restructuring Officer Benjamin Jones said the company is unable to stem losses and meet rent obligations to some of its largest landlords despite transferring nearly two-thirds of its facilities to new owners since early 2023, including 65 in Florida, according to a statement filed in the Northern District of Georgia court.

The group exited 19 facilities in the Tampa Bay region and 90 across its five-state footprint in total between the start of 2023 and early 2024, with only one remaining location in Harts Harbor in Jacksonville, according to the filing. LaVie has 43 remaining facilities, down from 140 in 2020. The company currently has 3,600 employees and did not say how many layoffs may have been caused by the downsizing.

An attorney for LaVie did not return a request for comment.

Jones attributed LaVie's financial breakdown to staffing shortages that began during the Covid-19 pandemic and forced the company to rely on staffing agencies. He added that nursing has yet to fully recover from the lasting impacts of that tumultuous period on the health care industry.

A minimum staffing requirement in Florida and a lack of state relief funds made the situation “particularly acute” in this state, according to Jones. LaVie's costs from agency services skyrocketed by 380% to \$277 million between 2020 and 2022, versus approximately \$49 million over the preceding two years combined, he said.

In addition to downsizing its footprint, LaVie had pursued an out-of-court solution to renegotiate its rent obligations before filing for Chapter 11, but legal challenges by other creditors ultimately thwarted its restructuring goals and forced an in-court process, according to the filing.

Tampa attorney John Anthony is representing nearly 100 individuals who are owed settlement money from lawsuits won against various entities related to LaVie, including Consulate Health Care. In a lawsuit he filed on April 22, Anthony claims the company has sought to change its corporate structure and fraudulently transfer licenses for facilities to new ownership in a “shifting shell game” with the intent to avoid paying the settlements.

“Consulate’s widespread and expanding web of defaults does not stem from logistical or administrative kerfuffles,” Anthony said in a letter to the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration. “Change of ownership of a [skilled nursing facility] can present itself to an unscrupulous owner/operator as a cheap and efficient method of avoiding the legal consequences of negligent care.”

LaVie is proceeding through the Chapter 11 restructuring with support from its main landlord and largest secured creditor, Omega Healthcare Investors, a publicly traded real estate investment trust. Omega, the landlord for 30 of LaVie’s remaining locations, has agreed to co-fund debtor-in-possession financing and help facilitate the sale of additional assets, according to the filing.

The following are facilities in the Tampa Bay region that LaVie transferred to new operators in the lead-up to the bankruptcy petition:

- 9035 Bryan Dairy Road in Largo, DBA as Bardmoor Oaks Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center
- 1026 Albee Farm Road in Venice, DBA as Bay Breeze Health and Rehabilitation Center
- 6305 Cortez Road W in Bradenton, DBA as Bradenton Health Care
- 1465 Oakfield Drive in Brandon, DBA as Brandon Health and Rehabilitation Center
- 2333 North Brentwood Circle in Citrus Hills, two locations, DBA as Health Center at Brentwood
- 14260 Tamiami Trail in North Port, DBA as Capital Health Care Associates
- 3825 Countryside Blvd. in Palm Harbor, DBA as Countryside Rehab and Healthcare Center
- 1111 Drury Lane in Englewood, DBA Englewood Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center
- 518 W Fletcher Ave. in Tampa, DBA as Fletcher Health and Rehabilitation Center
- 2916 Habana Way in Tampa, DBA Habana Health Care Center

- 1061 Virginia Street in Dunedin, DBA Lakeside Oaks Care Center
- 1507 South Tuttle Ave. in Sarasota, DBA Magnolia Health and Rehabilitation Center
- 12170 Cortez Blvd. in Spring Hill, DBA Spring Hill Health and Rehabilitation Center
- Tarpon Health Care Associates in Tarpon Springs
- The Villas at Lakeside Oaks in Clearwater
- 1010 Carpenters Way in Lakeland, DBA as Wedgewood Healthcare Center
- 741 South Beneva Road in Sarasota, DBA Beneva Laks Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center
- 702 South Kings Ave. in Brandon, DBA Central Park Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center
- 3111 Oakbridge Blvd. in Lakeland, DBA Oakbridge Healthcare Center