New York, August 13, 2021 -- Moody's Investors Service has affirmed the Aa3, Aa3/VMIG 1, and Aa3/P-1 ratings assigned to Advocate Aurora Health's (AAH) outstanding debt, which includes the obligations of legacy borrower Aurora Health Care, Inc., WI. The outlook is positive. AAH has approximately $3.55 billion of debt outstanding.

RATINGS RATIONALE

Affirmation of the Aa3 reflects AAH's leading market positions across two regions, business line breadth and strong financial discipline. After achieving lower but still solid operating cash flow (OCF) margins in fiscal 2020 and YTD 2021 amid pandemic related volume disruptions, AAH will likely return to and sustain OCF margins at pre-pandemic expectations of 9% to 10%. This would be supported by ongoing recovery in volume and strategic growth but will likely take longer than anticipated when the positive outlook was first assigned due to COVID related volume disruptions and staffing challenges. Operating and balance sheet leverage will remain moderate with management expecting to maintain current levels of debt and well-funded frozen and highly hedged pension plans. A return to pre-pandemic levels of operating cash flow and ongoing improvement in cash levels, however, would help contribute to cash to total debt, total debt to cash flow and days cash metrics that would be more in line with a higher rating. In addition to intensifying wage issues, offsets include strong competition in rapidly consolidating markets and ongoing payer pressures.

The affirmation of the short-term P-1 rating is supported by Moody's market access cash flow approach to longer-term variable rate instruments and our estimation of AAH's ability to pay the purchase price of a mandatory tender when due at the end of the mandatory tender "window" as well as AAH's strong liquidity. Moody's expects that AAH will be able to access the market given its strong revenue bond rating and the system's frequency of market participation. Affirmation of the VMIG 1 reflects the presence of standby bond purchase agreements and the creditworthiness of AAH.

RATING OUTLOOK

The positive outlook reflects Moody's view that AAH will likely be able to return to and sustain OCF margins at levels expected pre-pandemic while increasing absolute cash levels (excluding Medicare Advances and FICA deferrals). This would allow AAH to achieve or exceed stronger days cash, cash to debt and debt to cash flow metrics as forecasted.

FACTORS THAT COULD LEAD TO AN UPGRADE OF THE RATINGS

- Able to recover to pre-pandemic OCF levels in the 9% to 10% range and demonstrate durability
- Evidence that operating leverage as measured by debt to cash flow will be sustained at or below 2.0 times
- Ability to show ongoing improvement in cash to debt and days cash
- Unenhanced ST rating: Not applicable
- Enhanced ST rating: Not applicable

FACTORS THAT COULD LEAD TO A DOWNGRADE OF THE RATINGS

- Sustained decline in solid operating cash flow margins
- Meaningful decline in days cash or cash to debt metrics
- Additional debt resulting in less favorable leverage metrics
- Unenhanced ST rating: downgrade by Moody's of AAH's long-term rating below A2 or material adverse changes to AAH's access to the capital markets
- Enhanced ST ratings: downgrade by Moody's of the short-term Counterparty Risk Assessment of the banks that provide the SBPAs or the long-term rating of AAH

LEGAL SECURITY

Under an Amended and Restated Master Trust Indenture, issued in 2018, security is a general, unsecured obligation of the obligated group. There are no additional indebtedness tests. The members of the obligated group under the Master Indenture are: Advocate Aurora Health, Inc., Advocate Health Care Network, Advocate Health and Hospitals Corporation, Advocate Sherman Hospital, Advocate North Side Health Network, Advocate Condell Medical Center, Aurora Health Care, Inc., Aurora Health Care Metro, Inc., Aurora Health Care Southern Lakes, Inc., Aurora Health Care Central, Inc. d/b/a Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center, Aurora Medical Center of Washington County, Inc., Aurora Health Care North, Inc. d/b/a Aurora Medical Center Manitowoc County, Aurora Medical Center of Oshkosh, Inc., Aurora Medical Group, Inc., Aurora Medical Center Grafton LLC. The Amended and Restated MTI contains a substitution of notes provision.

PROFILE

Advocate Aurora Health, Inc. (AAH; $13.1 billion revenue in FY 2020), provides a continuum of care through its 24 acute care hospitals, an integrated children's hospital and a psychiatric hospital, which in total have 6,475 licensed beds, primary and specialty physician services with approximately 3,600 employed physicians, outpatient centers, physician office buildings, pharmacies, behavioral health care, rehabilitation, home health and hospice care in northern Illinois, eastern Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan.

METHODOLOGY


REGULATORY DISCLOSURES

For further specification of Moody's key rating assumptions and sensitivity analysis, see the sections Methodology Assumptions and Sensitivity to Assumptions in the disclosure form. Moody's Rating Symbols and Definitions can be found at: [https://www.moodys.com/researchdocumentcontentpage.aspx?docid=PBC_79004](https://www.moodys.com/researchdocumentcontentpage.aspx?docid=PBC_79004)

For ratings issued on a program, series, category/class of debt or security this announcement provides certain regulatory disclosures in relation to each rating of a subsequently issued bond or note of the same series, category/class of debt, security or pursuant to a program for which the ratings are derived exclusively from existing ratings in accordance with Moody's rating practices. For ratings issued on a support provider, this announcement provides certain regulatory disclosures in relation to the credit rating action on the support provider and in relation to each particular credit rating action for securities that derive their credit ratings from the support provider's credit rating. For provisional ratings, this announcement provides certain regulatory disclosures in relation to the provisional rating assigned, and in relation to a definitive rating that may be assigned subsequent to the final issuance of the debt, in each case where the transaction structure and terms have not changed prior to the assignment of the definitive rating in a manner that would have affected the rating. For further information please see the ratings tab on the issuer/entity page for the respective issuer on [www.moodys.com](http://www.moodys.com).

The ratings have been disclosed to the rated entity or its designated agent(s) and issued with no amendment resulting from that disclosure.

These ratings are solicited. Please refer to Moody's Policy for Designating and Assigning Unsolicited Credit Ratings available on its website [www.moodys.com](http://www.moodys.com).

Regulatory disclosures contained in this press release apply to the credit rating and, if applicable, the related rating outlook or rating review.
Moody's general principles for assessing environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks in our credit analysis can be found at http://www.moodys.com/researchdocumentcontentpage.aspx?docid=PBC_1288435.

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