

Hospice care facilities to combine

By Felice J. Freyer
GLOBE STAFF

HopeHealth, a hospice agency in Hyannis, plans to join forces with a Rhode Island company to form the largest not-for-profit hospice and palliative care provider in New England.

The affiliation, expected to be completed early next year, will bring HopeHealth under the umbrella of Home Care & Hospice of New England, a Providence company that includes the second-oldest hospice in the nation and a home-nursing agency.

Both HopeHealth, with a \$28 million operating budget and 230 employees, and the Rhode Island agency, which brings in \$45 million a year and has 420 employees, are financially strong, according to their chief executives.

By uniting, they said, the

two organizations will be better positioned to respond to new demands in a changing health care marketplace. "It's hard for a midsize health care organization to develop what's required in the future," said David W. Rehm, president of HopeHealth.

The organizations also want to take advantage of each other's differing strengths, Rehm said.

The affiliation is not expected to result in job cuts; officials said they are hopeful that they will expand services and add jobs. Home Care & Hospice currently serves about 1,200 patients a day, and HopeHealth has 1,100.

Rehm said he plans to retire when the deal is complete, and Diana Franchitto, president of Home Care & Hospice, will lead the combined organization.

The newly formed parent organization will be called HopeHealth.

Felice J. Freyer can be reached at felice.freyer@globe.com. Follow her on Twitter @felicejfreyer.

