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## **Sierra Tucson is being sold**

**\$130M is price for addiction-treating facility**

**By Jane Erikson**

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Sierra Tucson, a renowned addiction treatment center north of Tucson, will be sold for \$130 million to CRC Health Group, a for-profit addiction-treatment chain with facilities in 20 states.

Started in 1983, Sierra Tucson treated more than 16,000 patients in its first 20 years. Clients have included a slew of celebrities such as entertainer Julie Andrews, who describes on her Web site her decision to check into the center for grief counseling after the 1997 death of her favorite aunt.

Actor Michael Douglas said in 1994 that he checked into Sierra Tucson for treatment of alcohol abuse.

The center charges \$1,095 per day for addiction treatment and \$1,285 per day for eating disorders, according to its Web site.

Bill O'Donnell, founder and chairman of Sierra Tucson, said in a prepared statement released Wednesday that he was "extremely proud of what we have accomplished at Sierra Tucson over the last 22 years."

The agreement with CRC Health Group should enable Sierra Tucson "to reach even greater heights and carry on our tradition of clinical excellence and quality that we have so painstakingly built since its inception," O'Donnell said in the statement.

The statement did not discuss the reason for the sale, and an assistant to O'Donnell in his Chicago-area office said he would not comment beyond what was in the statement.

Sierra Tucson went from a publicly traded company to a private concern in March 2002. In an \$82.5 million deal that month, O'Donnell consolidated ownership of Sierra Tucson and the Miraval Life in Balance health resort under one company, NextHealth. Miraval is not part of the sale.

Bob Weiner, a spokesman for CRC Health Group, said the company was interested in Sierra Tucson because "it's a comprehensive facility. It's more than drug treatment. They also have programs for eating disorders and gambling disorders. ... It's a very successful facility and CRC is proud to have it."

Sierra Tucson is a 91-bed center with about 200 employees, who are expected to remain, Weiner said. It's located at 39580 S. Lago del Oro Parkway, near North Oracle and East Golder Ranch roads.

The facility ranked 200th this year in the Star 200, the Arizona Daily Star's listing of the biggest employers in Southern Arizona.

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