

## Health Care Group Of The Year: McDermott

By Adam Lidgett

*Law360 (February 24, 2023, 2:03 PM EST)* -- McDermott Will & Emery LLP helped push through numerous deals in the health care realm last year, including guiding CVS Health's decision to buy Signify Health in an \$8 billion deal, earning the firm a spot among Law360's 2022 Health Care Groups of the Year.

The firm had numerous transactions that made headlines from 2021 to 2022, one of them being CVS Health's purchase of Signify in a deal that represented a major transaction in a competitive industry that has undergone significant consolidation in recent years.

Jerry J. Sokol, the global leader of McDermott's health care practice group, called the CVS deal an important transaction. He noted that the firm had done work for the company in the past, which shows that CVS recognized McDermott for its expertise in the health care area.

"Value-based care is clearly a huge focus of where the entire health care industry is heading, and this marquee transaction clearly is representative of that," Sokol, a Florida-based partner, told Law360. "And we're proud of the fact that CVS relied on our counsel for that transaction."

Jeremy Earl, a partner based in Washington, D.C., called the CVS deal complex, noting that it was subject to a series of regulatory requirements. The merger is expected to close early this year.

"Working through the various issues with that transaction, and just given its size and significance, is definitely a noteworthy one," Earl said.

Sokol also said the firm had been helping guide health care company Mercy Health on an ongoing transaction concerning a partnership with the Mayo Clinic medical center. While the matter is not finished, it was announced in July, according to the firm. The purpose of the deal is to diagnose medical problems in patients earlier through the use of data, according to the firm.

Sokol said the deal was a great example of using McDermott's expertise in both digital health, as the whole deal has involved artificial intelligence, and sophisticated data analytics. He added that McDermott really prided itself on the breadth of its expertise in the health care area, and said that's why clients come to the firm.



Sokol said the firm's first-rate digital health practice was exemplified in the transaction with Mercy Health. Health systems are undergoing a huge transformation in the types of partnerships that they enter into, he said.

"This was a great example of our ability to lead these types of transactions," he said.

The firm also advised Healthcare Trust of America Inc. on an agreement to combine with Healthcare Realty Trust Inc., a real estate investment trust, which was announced in February 2022. That deal was worth \$18 billion, according to the firm, which added that it was one of the biggest mergers of the quarter.

Sokol said the firm's health care practice had just over 160 attorneys.

A significant number of the attorneys in McDermott's transaction group, litigation group and regulatory group are also spending a substantial part of their practice focusing on the health care industry, according to Sokol.

McDermott has about 1,200 attorneys, and because the firm is very focused on health care, it actually has hundreds of attorneys who are focused on the health care area, according to Sokol.

Sokol says the firm has health care attorneys in all of its U.S. offices, including Boston, New York, Washington, Atlanta, Miami, Chicago, Dallas, Austin and Los Angeles. Attorneys in the area are also located abroad in Germany, the United Kingdom and France, according to Sokol.

McDermott really started a dedicated health care practice in the 1970s, according to Sokol.

"Because of the longevity that our firm has been focused on health care and the true organic growth over almost 50 years, it is a very deep and broad health care practice," Sokol said. "[It] is unique for really one of the top AmLaw firms to have a health care practice that has that type of history."

--Editing by Karin Roberts.