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Health care firms agree to work together

Nelson Hardiman forms alliance, but not a merger, with Epstein Becker & Green

By David Ruiz
Daily Journal Staff Writer

After parting ways with a name partner and three of its attorneys, the health care-focused Los Angeles boutique now known as Nelson Hardiman LLP said Wednesday it has formed an alliance with Washington, D.C.-based Epstein Becker & Green PC.

The two plan to staff client matters with each other's lawyers when the client permits and will routinely meet to explore new avenues for increased service, said Nelson Hardiman founder and managing partner Harry Nelson.

Both Epstein Becker & Green and Nelson Hardiman represent health care providers and businesses affected by health care regulations.

However, Nelson Hardiman lacks the national footprint of its new business partner,

as well as a labor and employment practice — two factors of increasing importance to clients, Nelson said.

“Many of our clients that have primary care physician practices have sold themselves into larger foundations and groups” in the past few years, Nelson said.

Epstein Becker & Green's Los Angeles office managing shareholder David Jacobs said the agreement to work together has no timeline and is just the first step in improving their practices.

“They've been forced to migrate into larger organizations, so for us, aligning with a firm with the resources to service large organizations and with that critical labor and employment practice was absolutely essential,” he added.

Nelson said the Affordable Care Act has caused multiple shifts in the health care industry with new requirements and increased

enforcement activity against health care fraud, waste and abuse.

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Neither firm plans to merge with the other, Nelson said.

“The goal is to work together when our clients permit that,” Jacobs said. “We will work together and meet as often as we can to see how we can foster a mutually beneficial relationship.”

Both firms have experienced departures and reorganizations in the past. Until Sunday, Nelson Hardiman was known as Fenton Nelson LLP. But partner Henry R. Fenton and others have parted ways to create Fenton Law Group LLP.

In 2011, a seven-attorney health care litigation team inside Epstein Becker & Green moved to Crowell & Moring LLP's San Francisco and Los Angeles offices, amid an uptick in regulatory work for national firms.