

## **Pascack Hospital reopening advances**

Sunday, May 17, 2009

BY LINDY WASHBURN  
STAFF WRITER

The New Jersey Health Department will conduct a public hearing within the next month concerning Hackensack University Medical Center's proposal to reopen a community hospital in Westwood.

The state has determined Hackensack's application to be complete, setting in motion a public review process that will lead to a decision by the state Commission of Health on the reopening of the former Pascack Valley Hospital.

Health Department officials notified the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and Hackensack executives on Friday that the application had been deemed complete.

"A public hearing regarding your application will be scheduled in your hospital's service area within 30 days," or by June 14, said the letter to a Hackensack vice president from John Calabria, director of licensure and certificate-of-need review for the Health Department.

The determination came in advance of U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Rosemary Gambardella's decision — scheduled to be announced Tuesday — about whether to approve the sale of Pascack Valley's license to Hackensack for \$800,000.

Englewood Hospital and Medical Center and The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, the two hospitals that oppose reopening the Westwood hospital, have fought to block the license sale. Valley offered to pay \$2 million to purchase the license and terminate it.

Hackensack negotiated an agreement earlier this year with the trustees of the bankrupt hospital to buy the license. Donald Genaro, board chairman of the bankrupt hospital, certified to the court that the trustees had approved the sale.

"The Genaro certification, alone, is sufficient" to satisfy the application's requirements, Calabria's letter said.

"We are very pleased that the Certificate of Need application can now be considered for review," said Robin A. Ratliff, Hackensack's vice president for planning.

He noted that the settlement would not take effect until approved by the bankruptcy court.

"We're disappointed that the Department of Health has deemed the application complete," said Megan Fraser, a spokeswoman for Valley, "given that the Bankruptcy Court has not rendered its decision.

"We continue to fundamentally disagree with the need for a new hospital."

Hackensack seeks state approval to open a 128-bed, full-service community hospital, to be known as Hackensack University Medical Center North at Pascack Valley. The hospital will be managed by Legacy Hospital Partners Inc., of Texas, a venture capital firm that has committed to invest \$80 million, once the application receives final approval. The hospital will operate as a for-profit company, and pay taxes.

Pascack Valley closed in November 2007. The emergency department reopened last October for non-life-threatening emergencies.

E-mail: [washburn@northjersey.com](mailto:washburn@northjersey.com)

---

Find this article at:  
[http://www.northjersey.com/news/health/Hospital\\_reopening\\_advances.html](http://www.northjersey.com/news/health/Hospital_reopening_advances.html)

**The Record** - 150 River Street - Hackensack, NJ 07601