

## Hospital taking steps to control expenses

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Englewood Hospital and Medical Center has decided to cut 46 employees. The news is all too common, but hospital officials say the decision to restructure was necessary to stabilize their financial health during these tough economic times.

Twenty-four cuts are layoffs and 22 are positions reduced by attrition — due to resignations and planned retirements that will not be replaced. Five full-time positions at the institution will be reduced to part-time as well.

Jeanne Otersen, representative from the Health Professionals and Allied Employees union, said they want to see the business plan that would suggest the need for the layoffs. As of yet, they don't see a wane in profit.

Hospital spokesperson Maria Margiotta said that two years ago the hospital recruited and expanded staff to accommodate increased patient volumes due to the closing of Pascack Valley Hospital in Westwood.

But since then the trend has changed and patient volumes have actually declined as they have statewide.

"Now we must rebalance staffing to match lower patient volume," said Margiotta in a written statement. "After this restructuring, we will still have over 100 more employees than two years ago."

Union officials, however, state they have not seen the patient numbers dropping and they are participating in a series of meetings requesting this data from the hospital.

"As part of our contract they have to show the financial reason," said Otersen. "We are not seeing a decline in the census, in documentation of finance. It is their obligation to show us to help us protect the jobs of members and the patient care they provide."

President and CEO of Englewood Hospital Douglas Duchak said the restructuring will not have a detrimental effect on the center's quality patient care.

"The difficulties we continue to face in this industry, including declining patient volumes, a rise in uninsured patients and inadequate funding for charity care, Medicare and Medicaid, force us to make adjustments in how we operate," said Duchak.

Duchak maintains this is the responsible decision for the long term health of the hospital and the communities it serves.

The news amplifies Englewood Hospital's position on Pascack Valley. "Our region already has too many hospital beds," said Margiotta. "We support the former PVH facility as an outpatient medical complex; however, we continue to oppose the opening of a for-profit, acute care hospital."

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