

## **HUMC drops permit appeal for Pascack site**

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Hackensack University Medical Center withdrew an appeal Monday against the state and the hospital's competitors over the reopening of Pascack Valley Hospital, but it still intends to seek a license to operate the Westwood hospital.

The hospital plans to submit an application by the June 1 deadline to the state Department of Health and Senior Services to operate a 128-bed acute care medical center, officials said.

That's in response to former Health Commissioner Poonam Alaigh's issue for a call for applications for a certificate of need to open a new general hospital in Bergen County.

Hackensack officials had been pursuing a separate legal strategy to obtain the license but abandoned that on Monday.

The case was before the Appellate Division of state Superior Court concerning whether the license previously held by Pascack had lapsed on Dec. 28, 2009.

The hospital contended that the Permit Extension Act automatically extended the license, but The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood and Englewood Hospital and Medical Center said the act didn't apply in this case, as did former Health Commissioner Heather Howard.

"Hackensack University Medical Center has filed a motion to drop its Permit Extension Act suit against the State of New Jersey and the Commissioner of the Department of Health," Hackensack officials said in a prepared statement.

"HUMC has always remained confident that it would prevail in the Permit Extension Act suit," the statement said. "However, with the commissioner's issuance of a call for applications to open a new general hospital, it is no longer necessary to engage in litigation with the Department of Health, with whom we look forward to having a constructive application process, and a hearing on the merits of opening HUMC North at Pascack Valley."

The hospital's competitors said the decision substantiates the position of the Valley and Englewood hospitals, "and that of the state of New Jersey, that HUMC's claim was wholly without merit," Englewood and Valley said in a joint statement.

"HUMC continues to utilize every political maneuver at its disposal to reopen an unneeded hospital in Bergen County," the statement read. "It must now realize the courts are not swayed by political favoritism, but rather rely on the law when rendering decisions."

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