

## **Public hearing to be held on Hackensack opening new hospital at former Pascack Valley site.**

Saturday, October 8, 2011

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State officials will hold a public hearing on Oct. 19 on the proposal to reopen Pascack Valley Hospital in Westwood.

On Friday, the state deemed Hackensack University Medical Center's application complete. The hearing on Hackensack's plan to open a 128-bed community hospital in Westwood will be held at Westwood Regional Junior/Senior High School in Washington Township.

"This is an important step in the process toward restoring the much-needed hospital services to the residents of the Pascack and Northern Valley regions," said Robert C. Garrett, president and chief executive officer of HUMC. "We look forward to a public hearing which will allow community members to make their voices heard."

The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood and Englewood Hospital and Medical Center have both been fighting the proposal, citing a wealth of hospital beds in the area. Their legal objections have failed.

"We're disappointed that the department of health didn't ask Hackensack the series of questions that we submitted that we believe should have been part of the process," said Maria Margiotta, a spokeswoman for Englewood Hospital and Medical Center. "We're going to continue to show that there is no need for another acute-care hospital, and we'll look forward to the public hearing."

Valley Hospital officials could not be reached for comment Friday.

### **Follow-up in Trenton**

Hackensack wants to open the new hospital through a joint venture with LHP Hospital Group, a for-profit management and investment firm from Texas.

Following the public hearing, the State Planning Board will hold another meeting in Trenton, where it will also hear input from the public before voting on the application.

The state health commissioner is expected to decide in November whether to accept or reject the board's recommendation.

If the application is approved, HUMC officials say the new hospital should be open at the end of 2012.

The hearing will be held at 6 p.m. in the school's auditorium at 701 Ridgewood Road in Westwood.

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