



Mental Health Commissioner Zelia Baugh misses meeting on cuts in Tuscaloosa

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 **The Associated Press**
By

TUSCALOOSA, Alabama -- The commissioner of Alabama's Department of Mental Health failed to show up for a scheduled meeting about her proposal to shutter all but two of the state's mental health facilities.

The Tuscaloosa News reports that no reason was given for Commissioner Zelia Baugh's cancellation Friday. City Hall found out she wouldn't be there about 10 minutes before the 2 p.m. meeting was set to start.

Mayor Walt Maddox announced Baugh's absence to the gathering of more than 10 members of the state Legislature and other local officials who were seeking more information on the cuts.

Baugh's plan was announced Wednesday. It calls for the **closure of four of the state's six mental health hospitals** by Sept. 30. About 470 patients in those institutions would be transitioned into community-based care.



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Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa. (The Birmingham News /Tamika Moore)

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