

## UA halts psychiatric hospital construction in Tuscaloosa

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**AP** By **The Associated Press**

**TUSCALOOSA, Alabama** — The University of Alabama has ordered a halt to construction of a \$73 million psychiatric hospital near its campus, and officials aren't giving any explanation.

**The Tuscaloosa News reports** that Kenny Bush, a spokesman for the general contractor building the hospital, confirmed Friday that university officials had ordered that all work be suspended.

The new hospital was ordered to replace 151-year-old Bryce Hospital, which treats mental illnesses. However, last month state Mental Health Commissioner **Zelia Baugh announced the new hospital** will eventually be used to house court-committed criminal defendants.



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The psychiatric hospital being built to replace Bryce Hospital at the former site of the W.D. Partlow Developmental Center in Tuscaloosa, Ala. on March 10, 2012. (Chris Pow / al.com)

State Rep. Chris England, D-Tuscaloosa, says the university may be worried about having criminal defendants hospitalized close to campus. But university and state officials aren't commenting on whether that's why construction was stopped.