

State Mental Health Officials Delay Searcy Hospital Closure



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MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) - The state Mental Health Department has halted construction of a replacement hospital for Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa and is considering changing a plan to close some existing psychiatric hospitals.

Gov. Robert Bentley and state Mental Health Commissioner Zelia Baugh said they're looking at whether completing the \$73 million hospital in Tuscaloosa is the best use of the department's dwindling budget.

They told the state mental health board Wednesday in Montgomery they are also lifting a Sept. 30 deadline for the proposed closure of Greil Hospital in Montgomery, North Alabama Regional Hospital in Decatur, and Searcy Hospital in Mount Vernon.

Bentley said he still wants to move patient care from hospitals to community settings, but it will take time to develop the infrastructure.

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