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Alabama will have a state-run hospital for the mentally ill in Tuscaloosa

By Meredith Armstrong | Meredith Armstrong



Alabama will have a state run mental health hospital in Tuscaloosa.

The hospital will be built in the same location construction had already begun work, but Bentley halted it.

Construction crews are back on site. After much debate Governor Robert Bentley said the best idea is the original one....to build a new state of the art mental hospital.

Two hospitals, one in Mount Vernon and one in Montgomery will close their doors and transition to community based care, but not because of money.

Governor Bentley said, "Money has nothing to do with it because when I took, before I took office it was my desire to do the best that we could to modernize our mental health treatment in this state. Money has nothing to do with it at that time."

The closures will cost the state 3.5 million dollars in termination cost, but the federal government will match money spent at the community level for mental health.

State Representative Chris England said, “Bryce Hospital and North Alabama Regional Medical will be our safety net. So we look to the community first, but if someone can't get their care there then they end up in our institutions. It feels good to know that the city of Tuscaloosa will create a state of the art facility to take care of those individuals.”

The partial community-based care and state run facility appeals to most all those involved and will allow new community programs to be created.

Mental Health Commissioner, Zelia Baugh said, “Community Act Teams, which as physicians, nurses going into the communities and into people’s homes and making sure they take their medicines and case management to make sure their okay.”

The cost to finish the 268 bed hospital will be about 73 million-dollars.

This state hospital for the mentally ill is scheduled to be completed by August of 2013.

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