

Searcy Hospital closure date announced

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MONTGOMERY, Ala. (WALA) - The Alabama Department of Mental Health has announced a target closure date for Searcy Hospital of October 31, 2012.

While the closure of Searcy was announced in April 2012, its closing date was made official Tuesday, September 11 by ADMH Commissioner Jim Reddoch in a meeting with Searcy employees.

Admissions to Searcy will cease on September 17.

Searcy has traditionally served Alabamians from 16 counties in the southern part of the state. Its closure is the continuation of a nationwide trend of moving consumers from institutions to community-based care where they can be treated in the least restrictive setting and experience a life in their communities.

The department does recognize that a small number of consumers have needs that may not be best met in community-based care, and those individuals will receive services in other state hospitals.

Along with providing enhanced community life for consumers, the facility's closure will free up funds to be transferred to community-based care. AltaPointe Health Systems, Baldwin County Mental Health Center, South Central Alabama Mental Health Board, Southwest Alabama Mental Health Center and SpectraCare Health Systems will receive funding from ADMH to expand services and resources.

As with other recent facility closures, ADMH has been committed to helping staff find alternative employment. Voluntary transfers have been offered and will continue to be offered to ADMH hospitals in the Tuscaloosa and Decatur areas, as well as other positions statewide through the community mental health and state personnel systems.

In addition, several job fairs have been held, and ADECA's Rapid Response team will be on-site soon to provide information about unemployment compensation, pension benefits, job training, employment services, health insurance, credit counseling and many other services.

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