



Proposed Hospital Changes Rile Residents

WMAQ-TV

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CHICAGO - Hundreds of West Side residents were expected to attend a public hearing on Friday about threatened closures of specialized medical units at Advocate Bethany Hospital.



"I think it's important that people look at there are real human beings being affected by this," resident Emily Carter said.

Advocate Bethany Hospital officials said the facility is hemorrhaging money, and so it wants to shift the hospital's focus to caring for the sickest patients. However, that means they would close the obstetrics/gynecological services and mental health services, NBC5's Sharon Wright reported.

"We were serving an average of about 73 patients a day and losing over \$14 million a year," said Lena Dobbs-Johnson, president of Advocate Bethany Hospital.

The hospital would keep its emergency room open, but provide a relatively new concept of care.

"It (the hospital) will provide critical care services to patients who really need to stay in the hospital for a longer period of time," Dobbs-Johnson said. "Stroke patients, patients who are on the ventilator."

Residents said the hospital, which has been in the Garfield Park neighborhood for 85 years, is abandoning their medical needs.

"Bethany Hospital cannot try and slip out of Dodge in the night," said Chicago Alderman Ed Smith.

Bethany Hospital officials said residents live within five miles of some of Chicago's top medical facilities.

Cook County Commissioner Bobbie Steele said she understands the economics dictating the proposed changes.

"If I thought this hospital was violating citizens in this community, not giving them proper care, I would be the first to scream foul," she said.