



The **JERSEY JOURNAL**

Must be realistic on 'saving' hospital

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Greenville Hospital in Jersey City is dying but no one wants to pull the plug.

This was evident Thursday evening when a public hearing was held, more about on how to save the hospital.

One of the primary suggestions is that Greenville could receive an infusion of funding if it provided a unit for Hudson County prisoners - or perhaps as a psychiatric hospital. Oddly, there was not much public support for converting part of the 100-bed facility into a substance abuse rehabilitation center, a service that could tap into available state funding.

These are dire times for hospitals. As in the case of the Bayonne Medical Center, another private facility that is in danger of closing, politicians are making credible efforts too close to termination of the facilities. In any case, many of the proposals seem like temporary solutions that would extend a hospital's life for another year before the inevitable.

Should the hospitals in Bayonne and Greenville close, it would leave a large area of South Hudson without emergency services. Bayonne can only hope that future development and a growing real estate market attracts investment in smaller surgical units and doctors who can make a mark in the city. Emergency services will have to be handled by the Jersey City Medical should the Peninsula City's emergency room close.

In Greenville, the reality is stark. Although disputed by some doctors, Greenville Hospital is expected to lose more than \$3 million this year and is subsidized by Jersey City Medical Center by an additional \$1 million. Millions are needed for infrastructure repair and new equipment.

The parent LibertyHealth System says market share data shows that 85 percent of Greenville residents do not go to Greenville Hospital when they need inpatient care. Also, most patients who go to the Greenville Hospital emergency room are looking for primary, not emergency care. Even more damning are LibertyHealth's claim that more Greenville residents use the Jersey City Medical Center emergency room than the one in Greenville.

The implication is that should Greenville close, little will change, except the end of a more than 100-year-old facility.

Now that they are involved, politicians should take a very cold, professional look at the situation at Greenville Hospital before a great deal of taxpayer money is used to prop it up.

© 2007 The Jersey Journal

© 2007 NJ.com All Rights Reserved.