

NY HOSPITALS LETS GO CLINICAL STAFF



Bad news has come for the workers, and the community surrounding, the Peninsula Hospital. Peninsula Hospital, which is located in Far Rockaway, New York, is getting ready to make some serious cuts to its staff. Staffing cuts that may lead to a delay in vital care and critical community services. These staff cuts come during restructuring plans that are the result of a change of ownership. As the new owners have come to realize that they have to make some changes to ensure that the hospital stays in the black, and that some of those changes mean letting go off a portion of the clinical staff. On of the nurses who got the layoff news personally this week, Mary Kampa, who is also a representative for the local nurses union had this to say to a local reporter for the NY Daily News, who broke the story, "A lot of us gave up most of our summer and fought to keep this hospital open," she said. "For this to happen is just devastating." The hospital almost closed entirely this past summer, before it was bought by a new group. The nurses who did not get the pink slip also expressed regrets about what was happening to their colleagues. Some of them expressed an anxiety over the changes being made to the staffing, while others simply lamented the loss of their friends and colleagues from the facility. After all, every job lost in the restructuring means a higher patient load for the remaining staff and a body of research has shown that the more patients a nurse has the lower their quality of care is. The patient to nurse ratio is so important that many states regulate maximums for critical or intensive care patients. The hospital is not undertaking these layoffs lightly. The Peninsula Hospital is currently in the process of filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Its new owners, a company known as Revival Home Health Care, choose to file after acquiring the facility from MediSys Health Network in September of this year. At that point the hospital had already acquired over \$60 million in debt. The CEO of Peninsula, Todd Miller, told a reporter for the NY Daily News that, "As quickly as we can bring workers back we will. We needed to buy ourselves some breathing room. We're trying to position the hospital for rapid restructuring and success." He then went on to say that the layoffs should not come as a surprise, "All along we said we were probably going to need downsize before we could increase staffing." So, who got the layoff notices? Well, in addition to members of the nursing staff other members of the clinical team, such as the X-ray technicians and respiratory therapists, were also give the pink slip this week. Most of these workers belong to the 1199 SEIU union, which is good news for them, since the union does allow for both help with job placements and extensions of the health benefits for the workers.

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