

HAWAII HOSPITALS CLOSE - LAYOFF 200



The islands of Hawaii are undeniably beautiful, but if you get laid off there you may have serious problems finding a new position. The low population and the limited amount of employers can make a bad situation worse in the current economy. That may be the situation that will be face by the workers at Hawaii Medical Center. 200 of their workers were given a layoff notice on Friday in what is being termed a first wave of layoffs. The layoffs of Hawaii Medical Center are related to the imminent shutdown of not one, but two of the hospitals in the island state. The facilities are on the island of Oahu. The two facilities that are closing come from the Hawaii Medical Center East and the Hawaii Medical Center West facilities. These facilities began the process of total shutdown two days before the Christmas holiday. While the official shout down of the facilities was on Friday, including the closing of two of the states emergency departments, the actually layoffs did not go into effect until Saturday. So employees were basically let go on Christmas Eve. Maria Kostylo, the CEO of Hawaii Medical Center, expressed her regrets over the situation in a written statement where she said the following, " We truly regret the layoff and the impact it will have on affected employees, their families and the community. This was something we had been working hard over the last six months to avoid, first through Chapter 11 bankruptcy and then through our efforts to sell the hospitals." Currently the hospital has not let go of all of its staff. They are required by law to keep on enough staff to care for the patients who are currently admitted and under care. Once the current patients in the hospitals are either discharged from the facilities care or transferred to another hospital in the area the facility will be able to layoff the remaining workers and close for good. This is expected to happen in the next couple of weeks. Currently the hospital has less than 60 patients remaining between the two facilities. The majority of these patients require renal care, which is essential for patients living, very time consuming and requires extensive supervision. The employees who were affected by these layoffs will not be give any type of severance benefits by their employer at all. The only recourse will be the national unemployment insurance program. The Hawaii Nurses' Association, the union that represents roughly 300 of the registered nurses at the facilities, has already made plans to hold special meetings to help the displaced health workers. They will be able to get advice on filing for unemployment and Quest health coverage. Unlike in other situations because the facilities are shutting down completely the COBRA insurance will not be available to workers either. Over the holiday weekend the paramedics in the area are already showing an increase in the number of calls that they have to take. The other emergency departments in the are also experiencing a higher volume of visits due to the emergency department closures.

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