

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI MEDICAL CENTER LAYS OFF



Bad news has come to the workers, and the patients of the University of Mississippi Medical Center. They have decided to cut down on their staff in not one, but two different ways. The first way is simple, and relatively benign to the local economy. The hospital has chosen not to fill about 90 positions that are currently vacant. While that does not help with economic growth, it is also not hurting any of the facilities current workers. The second part however is a bit more sinister. The facility handed layoff notices to 115 of the current employees on Wednesday. It is estimated that the these two moves, in combination will save the medical center about \$12 million each year. The official comment from the facility, given in a news release, by Dr. James Keeton about the layoffs was, "It is imperative that we align our costs with our revenues. We have no other option." Apparent the current round of layoffs is a response to the medical centers 2011 budget. At the end of the year the facility found itself in the red. In order to prevent that from happening again in the current year the facility is letting go of staff. At the current moment it is to early to judge whether or not the move is reactionary or based on realistic predictions of how the year will go from hard data. At the current moment the facility is looking to preserve as much of their clinical staff as they can. To that end only nine of the cuts were made to registered nurses. Though other members of the staff including administrators, technicians and members of the support staff were not as lucky as nursing staff. Keeton was, in the same release, very careful to assure local residents that the jobs cuts should not have an impact on the quality of care that they will receive, "We're doing nothing that affects patient care. We watch that very carefully." So, apparently the hospital believes that cutting back on support staff and medical technicians will not adversely affect the experience or the quality of care that the patients of the facility receive. The University of Mississippi Medical Center current employs about 9,000 people. The funding from the facility currently comes from many sources. While about 11 percent of the hospitals \$1.3 billion annual budget is provided by the state that money is mostly earmarked for training and community educations projects The facility blamed a number of factors for their recent loss of revenue. Issues such as a decrease of patients choosing to have elective procedures done at the hospital and a decrease in the number of patients with insurance were cited. The facility is required, by federal law, to treat uninsured patients, and if they are not able to pay the bill to write off some, or all of the costs of their care. This issue, especially in the children's hospital, has created a real deficit for the facility. The University of Mississippi Medical Center is currently also the state's only public medical school.

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