

JAMES B. CRAIG NURSING CENTER AT CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL CLOSING



The Telegraph reported the James B. Craig Nursing Center at Central State Hospital in Milledgeville will close in a little more than a year. The closing will send 127 seriously disabled patients to smaller community nursing facilities, and forcing its 350 employees to unemployment. Regional Hospital Administrator said: "We're anticipating closing the Craig Center Dec. 31 of 2013," according to The Telegraph. There are three reasons the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities has decided to close the state-run nursing home. Regional Hospital Administrator said: "Number one is the state of Georgia is choosing not to be in the nursing home business any longer," according to The Telegraph. The second reason for the closing is the belief the individuals who reside at the Craig Center can be supported by existing community care facilities. The third reason is that state officials aren't sure the Craig Center's operation would meet standards of a U.S. Department of Justice settlement. The Justice Department investigated Georgia state hospitals in 2007 and discovered "preventable deaths, suicides and assaults occurred with alarming frequency," according to a federal announcement in October 19, 2010. The federal announcement said: "Further investigation found that the state also failed to serve individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs." There was a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and a previous U.S. Supreme Court decision relating to Georgia state hospitals. In October 2010, state and federal officials reported a legal settlement involving Georgia's mental health and developmental disability system. According to an assistant U.S. attorney general for civil rights, under the settlement the state of Georgia provides services in the community to people with developmental disabilities and people with mental illness. The settlement gave Georgia five years to give 9,000 mentally ill individuals community-based care. This created at least 1,000 Medicaid waivers to move all developmentally disabled people in state hospitals to community nursing care, including a boost in family and housing support. State hospitals averaged \$174,000 per year in spending to house each patient, compared with the \$47,000 per year average of giving services at home. Services provided outside of institutions could qualify for Medicaid matching funds instead of the state paying entirely, according to a news release on the settlement. Currently, only half of the Craig Center's 255 beds are filled. Considering how much [state health-care facilities](#) have cut back, many of the people working at the Milledgeville center won't find similar positions when they lose their jobs.