St. Vincent’s Shuts Down Its Manhattan Hospital Inpatient Services

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St. Vincent Catholic Medical Centers’ board voted April 6 to close its hospital in Greenwich Village, Manhattan, because it cannot recover from an estimated $700 million in debt, *The New York Times* reports. A task force, however, is working to preserve the facility’s HIV programs.

“The decision to close St. Vincent’s Hospital Manhattan inpatient services was made only after the board, management and our advisers exhausted every possible alternative,” Alfred E. Smith IV, chairman of St. Vincent Catholic Medical Centers, said in a statement. He added that the board was unable to come up with a way “to save the inpatient services at the hospital that has proudly served Manhattan’s West Side and downtown for 160 years.”

Outpatient services, including general emergencies that don’t require a stay of more than 24 hours, will remain uninterrupted by the transition. The last day for elective surgeries at the facility is April 14.

Governor David Paterson will work with the board and the city’s Department of Health to preserve some of the hospital’s most important outpatient services, including those that provide HIV treatment and primary care. The governor had put together a task force to work with the hospital to find another facility to either absorb or unite with St. Vincent’s, but these efforts were unsuccessful.

“While we are disappointed that we were unable to find a partner for the acute care inpatient services,” Paterson said in a statement, “we should use this as an opportunity to ensure that the health care needs of this community are met by creating an urgent care center combined with other vital health care services the community needs. To that end, I have directed the Department of Health to solicit proposals for this new model of care.”

The board’s vote closes the last Roman Catholic general hospital in New York. To maintain an urgent care center, St. Vincent’s will need to find a partner hospital. One interested party is Mount Sinai Medical Center, which has yet to comment on the matter.

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