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## Westchester Medical Center to lay off 130 workers

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VALHALLA — Westchester Medical Center will lay off 130 people, about half of whom work in a medical unit at the county jail, hospital officials announced Thursday night.

Hospital management notified the staff Thursday afternoon and will let individual employees know about the status of their jobs over the next week.

"It's a real loss. ... A number of people on staff are being retraumatized. Again we're having layoffs and we've barely recovered from the last round," said Michael Cappiello, vice president of the Civil Service Employees Association, the hospital's largest union, which took a hit when the hospital cut 400 jobs in 2009.

This round of layoffs comes after hospital officials and county lawmakers failed to agree on a contract for the hospital to continue treating the county jail inmates.

The medical center for years ran a nationally recognized medical unit at the jail in exchange for \$12.5 million in county support, which included utilities and maintenance of the campus that the hospital and the jail share.

The arrangement had the medical center running the program at an annual \$2.5 million loss, Westchester Medical Center Chief Executive Michael Israel said.

Israel tried unsuccessfully to negotiate with the county executive for more money. The county contracted with another vendor.

"We have made it clear from the beginning that the Medical Center cannot and will not operate at a deficit and that this reduction would require cuts in programs and staff, including termination of our Correctional Health Services contract," Israel said in a statement.

Former County Executive Andrew Spano cut the \$12.5 million in support to the medical center in his proposed 2010 budget, which county legislators voted for in December.

County Executive Rob Astorino upheld those cuts and contracted with another vendor, Correct Care Solutions of Nashville, Tenn.

The county will pay Correct Care Solutions \$45 million over three years. The county executive's office said the new vendor costs \$3 million less than a new contract with the hospital would cost.

Some of the workers laid off from the hospital might get jobs with the new vendor.

Hospital officials terminated the contract as of July 26, even as county officials asked them to stay until the end of 2010, said Ned McCormack, spokesman for Astorino.

"We repeatedly asked them to honor the contract until the end of the year. They chose not to and we were forced to look for other vendors, which we did, and we hired CCS after a thorough review," McCormack said.