

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

November 14 –November 18, 2011

JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM (JHS)

On Thursday, Jackson Health System (JHS) announced plans to eliminate 240 positions (2.5 percent of the workforce). The decision comes on the heels of a \$9.6 million loss for the month of October, a 50 percent increase over the \$6.5 million loss in October 2010. Out of the 240 positions, 170 are filled by employees that will be laid off. The others are vacant positions that will be abolished (the majority of the positions do not involve clinical care). Chief Executive Carlos Migoya explained that the measures are necessary due to a continuing decline in patient volumes.

Last week, Migoya ordered most employees to take two weeks of furlough time, which Chief Financial Officer Mark Knight indicated would save the hospital \$11 million in December. The savings would help offset \$12 million that will be given to employees in December for cashing in vacation days.

Additionally, Jackson's board gave management the approval to outsource the service of qualifying patients for Medicaid. Currently, the work is shared between Jackson employees and CEA, an Atlanta based firm. However, due to the higher labor costs for Jackson's employees, outsourcing could save JHS approximately \$1.7 million.

On Thursday, JHS management also declared an impasse in negotiations with the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees. As a result, a magistrate will mediate the dispute and if an agreement is not reached, the matter will go before the County Commission for a final decision.

MIAMI

Coconut Grove Playhouse *as reported by the Herald*

In 2006 the Coconut Grove Playhouse (CGP) was shut down with an accumulated debt of \$ 4 million. After five and a half years of unsuccessful settlement negotiations, CGP has asked Miami-Dade County to accept the theater and surrounding property for a \$1 amount. In a letter to Mayor Carlos Gimenez and Commissioner Xavier Suarez, CGP board chair Shelly Spivak indicated that the property had been appraised and valued at \$6.58 million.

Commissioner Suarez has been calling for swift action on the property transfer in order to avert state control, which was amended into a bill introduced by Florida House majority Leader Carlos Lopez-Cantera and passed by the legislature. A deed restriction requires the property be used for theater, theatrical productions theater education or related arts uses. The amendment passed by the legislature stipulates that the property revert to the state if it fails to be used for the specified purpose.

Spivack's letter indicates that the property is being offered with the understanding that \$20 million in existing county bond money be used to develop a new theater with 300 seats, that the county honors the board's agreement with GablesStage to operate the new theater, and that the property use restrictions remain intact. Furthermore, the letter requests that the county agree to resolve all obligations to the theater's creditors indemnify board members against lawsuits and pay legal costs related to the former operation of the playhouse.

All parties remain optimistic that the issue will be remedied and if an agreement is reached within the next few weeks, Commissioner Suarez indicated that he would recommend that it be presented before the Board of County Commissioners.

HIALEAH

On Tuesday, November 15th, the City of Hialeah held its run-off elections. According to reports, the voter turnout was estimated at 31,000, compared to 30,000 in the general election. Along with the mayor, voters selected city council members in Group 1, Group 3, and Group 6 races.

The results were reported as follows:

Hialeah Mayor: Carlos Hernandez 61% (winner) / Raul Martinez 40%

Hialeah Councilmember Group 1: Lourdes Lozano 61% (winner) / Alex Morales 39%

Hialeah Councilmember Group 3: Danny Bolanos 32% / Vivian Casals-Munoz 68% (winner)

Hialeah Councilmember Group 6: Paul "Pablito" Hernandez 59% (winner) / Frank Lago 41%

HOMESTEAD

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which partially funds the Homestead Housing

Authority, released a report saying that the authority has been grossly mismanaged since 2006 and requires an outside organization to “clean house”.

Among the issues cited in the Department of Agriculture report:

- Tenants were overcharged for their utility use over a period of four years (those tenants are currently owed about \$58,000).
- Housing was assigned to workers who didn't qualify because they lacked immigration papers.
- Some farm workers who should have received rent assistance received none; consequently, spending over 50 percent of their income on housing.
- Employees were paid bonuses up to 25 percent of their salaries.

The USDA's report also criticized the housing authority for having empty units available, while farmworkers in need of housing were kept waiting. In some instances, households were forced into homes that were too small, while others had room to spare. Other deficiencies included water damage, missing smoke detectors, filthy conditions and lack of access for the disabled.

HUD has also recently conducted a review of the housing authority but has not yet released its findings.

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

North Bay Village Mayor Corina Esquijarosa who has been amid controversy and under an investigation for the illegal use of the state's Homestead Exemption law, resigned on Friday, November 11th.

According to investigations, Esquirosa said her legal residence was in North bay Village, a requirement for being elected mayor, but she claimed a homestead exemption on an apartment in Miami which was being rented out. Public records showed that she claimed the exemption in 2010 and 2011, while her husband claimed a homestead exemption on an adjacent property which the couple owned together and was also leased out.

Upon the findings, the Miami-Dade Assessor's office required repayment, which was not received. Consequently, a lien was filed against the property for \$3,109.70 in back taxes and penalties.

Additionally, prosecutors seized records from Esquirosa's office as part of the fraud investigation and offered to drop the charges if Esquirosa resigned. Moreover, the

Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust fined her \$500 for violating the county ethics code; And a recall effort was launched, collecting 5 times the required signatures.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Miami-Dade County League of Cities:

What: MDCLC Best Practices Conference

When: December 2, 2011

Where: Intercontinental Doral, 2505 NW 87th Ave., Doral

Four County Regional Compact Announces 3rd Annual Climate Leadership Summit

The Summit will feature speakers and discussions on sustainability and climate change, and the Regional Climate Action Plan will be presented.

The Southeast Florida four-County Regional Climate Change Compact consisting of Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties is pleased to announce the 3rd Annual Regional Climate Leadership Summit to be held December 8-9, 2011 in Key Largo, Florida. To register click the link: <http://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/forms.aspx?FID=80>