

“This was the heart and soul of our community”: Residents speak against hospital closures in Chester and Ridley Park, Pennsylvania

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Two major Pennsylvania hospitals, Crozer Chester Medical Center and Taylor Hospital, have now closed their doors to Delaware County and its half a million residents. The closures destroy a vital resource in the community and have caused one of the largest mass layoffs in recent Pennsylvania history, with 2,651 workers losing their jobs.

The sell-off of Crozer assets and the subsequent closures were approved by Judge Stacey Jernigan on April, 23, 2025, in a bankruptcy proceeding in Texas involving the California-based parent company of Crozer, Prospect Medical Holdings, Inc. The company had been seeking bankruptcy protections since January. Prospect, a for-profit firm, acquired Crozer in 2016 and proceeded to strip its assets and saddle it with an estimated \$400 million in debt.

Private equity firm Leonard Green & Partners controlled a majority stake in Prospect until 2021. CBS News reported that the firm’s leadership handed itself \$457 million in dividends in the year 2018 alone. That year, Prospect Medical’s CEO Sam Lee took home \$90 million, and Leonard Green shareholders gobbled up \$257 million.

Almost immediately after the court finalized the bankruptcy sell-off plan, the Pennsylvania hospitals closed their doors. Within just one week of the order almost all of the patients in both hospitals had been packed up and shipped like cargo to a different location—mere commodities in America’s for-profit health care system.

Eight facilities closed in all: Crozer-Chester Medical Center; Crozer-Taylor Hospital; Crozer-Chester

Medical Center Behavioral Health Unit; Crozer Health Corporate Offices; Crozer-Springfield Hospital; Crozer Springfield Hospital Offices; Crozer-West 15th Street Offices; Crozer-West 15th Street Offices Behavioral Health Unit.

The consequences of the closures will be far-reaching for this historic working-class community southwest of Philadelphia, once a major manufacturing area.

It is openly admitted that lives will be lost in emergency room visits, owing to commute times to the nearest hospitals of at least one half-hour—or much longer in metropolitan Philadelphia, currently ranked the fifth-most congested city in the US. The absorption of tens of thousands of patients from the Chester area in other hospitals will stretch these already overburdened and understaffed facilities to the breaking point.

Despite these warnings, neither the state government headed up by Democratic Governor Josh Shapiro, nor the state legislature, where party control is divided, took any action that would have prevented the closures. Meanwhile, at the national level, Republican and Democratic parties spend trillions of dollars on war, corporate bailouts and tax breaks for the super-rich, while the working class is told that it must pay with austerity and the loss of vital resources.

WSWS reporters spoke to local residents to learn how the closures will impact their lives.

Maureen, a longtime resident of the area, said: “I have a 17-year-old son now, and we live right across the street in the apartments, and I remember I could just walk him to the emergency room if I needed to. My ex-husband and his elderly mother live right up the street

and have been to this hospital many times for emergency reasons. My ex-husband once had a blood clot, and had he not had a hospital this close he could have been killed.”

Maureen said several other family members and friends have used both hospitals. “I am so disheartened that these hospitals have closed,” she said. “We need them. There are just so many more sickly people now since COVID, and having underlying issues.”

Another lifelong resident, Donna, said: “My heart goes out to the people who will be hurt by these closures. The owner company should be held accountable.”

“My taxes will have to go up now because they didn’t want to pay theirs,” she added.

Ray, another resident, echoed Donna, adding that “taxes keep going up for regular people, while the rich pay less in taxes and keep getting richer.” Ray told reporters that very morning he had returned after a 45-minute drive to take his elderly mother to the nearest hospital. Ray was standing just one block from the recently-closed Taylor hospital, picking up a prescription for his mother.

Mary, 74, a lifelong resident, told the WSWS that she was “scared to death for her grandchildren.”

“I wonder where some of my elderly family members will go, all of our medical needs were met by these hospitals. I blame the local and state government at fault for not doing enough to keep the hospitals open and for not taking the action required to keep these facilities operating.” When a WSWS reporter noted that the federal government finds \$1 trillion for the Pentagon’s war machine and nothing to keep open hospitals on which hundreds of thousands defend, Mary said, “I agree with you completely.”

Mary added that her grandmother once served on the board of the hospital, whose roots stretch back well over a century. “This hospital was the heart and soul of our community,” she said. “And what will happen to the laid-off workers? How will they put food on the table?”

Larry, a former resident, explained to the WSWS said that his friend, who worked in the Crozer finance office, said that the word had gotten out that Prospect Holdings was stripping the hospital for its assets. “The closure is going to devastate the community,” Larry said. “It was its center.” Himself a former worker at

Crozer, Larry pointed out that Martin Luther King Jr completed his undergraduate studies at Crozer Theological Seminary, which was once attached to the hospital.

One resident thanked the WSWS for reporting on the closure but, he said, “You’re too late. Our hospitals are gone.” The reporters told the man that what has been done can be undone, and that the alarm must be raised for the whole working class. What has been done to Chester and Ridley Park can be done everywhere.



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