

Vital community hospital threatened with shutdown in Jersey City, New Jersey

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In late October, Hudson Regional Health (HRH) announced that one of its four facilities, Jersey City's Heights University Hospital (HUH), formerly Christ Hospital, would stop providing all "non-essential" services. This move would result in layoffs and a planned closure by November 10, according to a letter HRH sent to Democratic Governor Phil Murphy and the New Jersey Department of Health. Earlier in the month, HRH had threatened such cuts unless it received state assistance. The state responded with a \$2 million payment, but in a new statement, HRH claimed the facility was losing \$1.5 million each week.

HUH is a community hospital that serves a large number of uninsured patients. In Jersey City—where poverty is 18 percent higher than the national average and unemployment remains high—the loss of HUH would greatly harm the city's working class, especially as the Trump administration continues to cut Medicaid and public health funding and roll back limited insurance protections under the Affordable Care Act.

HRH Chief Executive Officer Dr. Nizar Kifaieh emphasized that, despite the state aid and what he described as more than \$300 million invested across HRH's four hospitals, "dire financial challenges" still remain. He blamed "previous operators," referring to CarePoint Health, which filed for bankruptcy in November 2024, owing more than \$100 million. In a statement issued that week, Kifaieh stated that low reimbursement rates, cuts to Charity Care and a high number of uninsured patients have made ongoing operations "unsustainable."

Democratic state legislators are now requesting an additional \$25 million in aid, citing the need to maintain essential services. However, even as they proposed the new funding, HRH had already submitted a Certificate of Need application to the New Jersey Department of Health for a phased hospital closure, according to a letter from

the department. The two-phase plan outlined in the application requires the hospital's complete shutdown by November 10. It details HRH's plan to redevelop the property into a mixed-use residential and commercial complex, while vaguely promising that a new facility will be built nearby.

The Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE), which represents nurses at HUH, recalled in a statement that HRH had assured the bankruptcy court and state regulators it had sufficient resources to take over the then-bankrupt Christ Hospital. "They now claim they do not have the financial backing to operate Heights University Hospital and must either close the hospital or drastically reduce services," the union said. The rapid reversal—touting its ability to rescue the crisis-ridden hospital in January, only to bemoan insolvency in October, barely two weeks after the hospital's formal re-opening—exposes the fraudulent nature of HRH's assurances to the court.

In early 2025, HRH acquired the bankrupt Christ Hospital from CarePoint Health. During a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 15, 2025, Hudson Regional Health formally launched its new four-hospital network, including Bayonne, Hoboken, Secaucus and Jersey City, rebranding Christ Hospital as Heights University Hospital. HRH announced a \$75–100 million system-wide investment plan for upgrades and modernization.

"This is not just a name change or cosmetic change. This shows our commitment to what's coming next for the population of Hudson County," CEO Nizar Kifaieh told NJ Advance Media.

Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop praised HRH chairman Yan Moshe's "track record of turning these facilities around."

State Senator Raj Mukherji declared, "I'm grateful that Yan and the new operators are not only saving these hospitals from closure, they're investing much-needed

capital to make these facilities the world-class facilities that patients in Hudson County deserve.”

Just six weeks later, Mukherji was requesting \$25 million more in aid and promising there would be “guardrails”—a complete reversal that shows how quickly the entire “rescue” fell apart. The praise hid the real track record of Yon Mashe, whose whole career exposes the main problem with this “rescue.”

Moshe, the chairman of HRH, was already notorious for promising to “rescue” Christ Hospital. Since 2007, he has faced nine lawsuits under the federal RICO Act from major insurers like State Farm and GEICO, alleging fraudulent billing, kickbacks and the use of straw owners to hide his illegal control of medical practices. In 2018, his surgical center was shut down after state investigators discovered sterilization lapses that exposed hundreds of patients to infection. Moshe donated over \$400,000 to Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop, who supported his takeover, and installed Dr. Kifaieh as CEO, despite Kifaieh being named in RICO suits and harassment litigation. These facts were publicly available when regulators approved the deal, making what followed entirely predictable.

HRH has already started laying off employees and reducing admissions at Heights University Hospital, sometimes verbally telling nurses and technicians that their departments were closed. The New Jersey Department of Labor confirmed that HRH did not file the required WARN Act notice before cutting staff. According to HPAE, at least 80 workers have been told they might lose their jobs, and nearby hospitals are already feeling the strain from diverted patients. The union is pleased that the Department of Health has stepped in to review HRH’s actions—viewing this oversight as progress—while continuing to limit its demands to procedural appeals and “fair bargaining” over layoffs.

For hundreds of healthcare workers, the layoffs mean unemployment and the loss of hard-won benefits. Workers should not trust HRH’s claims that most of the laid-off employees will be offered continued employment at other HRH hospitals, and they should dismiss the company’s promised job fairs following the layoffs as a gesture beneath contempt.

For working class families across Jersey City, it means longer travel times, overcrowded emergency rooms, and the end of routine care for thousands of uninsured residents. Yet, as the crisis worsens, Democratic Party state legislators continue to posture over another \$25

million for HRH, and the Department of Health refuses to step in.

HPAE officials responded with bluster—appealing to the same state authorities that facilitated HRH’s takeover and “considering legal action” to recover unpaid 401(k) contributions, while demanding only that management bargain over layoffs. They have never once called for collective action to halt the firings or the closure itself. The union’s true concern is protecting its own privileges through ongoing collaboration with the corporate operators and the state.

The attack on Heights University Hospital is part of a nationwide assault on public health led by the Trump administration. While cutting funding for Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, the White House is dismantling pandemic preparedness and community health programs, spreading anti-vaccine propaganda and handing over the entire health system to private interests. These policies, along with record military spending and Wall Street bailouts, are lowering life expectancy and eroding every social right of the working class.

The fate of Heights University Hospital results not from mismanagement or a single corrupt operator but from a healthcare system entirely subordinated to private profit. The planned conversion of hospital property into luxury housing exemplifies, in the clearest way, the priorities of the capitalist market: profit over human life. Healthcare workers cannot rely on unions or the Democratic Party to defend their jobs or the right to quality care. Instead, they need to create rank-and-file committees, independent of the union bureaucracy and capitalist parties, to unite with workers in every industry in the struggle for socialized healthcare and society’s reorganization based on human needs, not profit.



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