

South End News

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FALL PREVIEW EDITION

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Boston Medical Center lays off 119

Funding shortfalls required move

BY KATE VANDER WIEDE
MANAGING EDITOR

The Boston Medical Center (BMC), at One Boston Medical Center Place, plans to lay off 119 employees come October 1, a statement from the hospital said Friday, September 10.

"The hospital is projected to lose \$175 million this year due to dramatic changes in Medicaid reimbursements," Tom Traylor, BMC's vice president of federal, state and local programs, said in the statement. "We have been talking to the staff about this new reality for well over a year, and have been working to assess and increase efficiency in every corner of the hospital."

The layoffs will come in a variety of places, and will include 30 members of management, 44 registered nurses and administrative positions. The last time the hospital made this many cuts was in December of 2008,

when they laid off 250 people to save \$10.5 million.

The hospital has a total work force of almost 6,000 people, with more than 1,500 of those employees being nurses.

The cuts come out of "shortfalls in funding for services we provide to low-income patients," explained Maria Pantages, Interim Director of Corporate Communications, in an email. These low-income patients make up 50% of the center's patient population.

"Because of the revenue shortfall, we have done a number of things to help offset the loss," Pantages continued. "We've had an across-the-board wage freeze, we've cut expenses on supplies, prescription drugs and a host of other non-salary expenses. We've made changes to our medical plans."

In July, BMC even closed one of their emergency centers, consolidating services to the Menino Pavillion.

Employees who are being laid off were informed in writing on Friday. Kate Walsh, the president and CEO

of the BMC since this January, has been hosting 'town hall meetings' with employees to discuss the move. Three were held on Tuesday.

"Kate Walsh hosted three town meeting sessions...to discuss our financial position, the reduction in workforce, the work we are doing in order to increase our efficiency, grow patient volume and reduce costs, as well as to answer employees' questions and concerns," Pantages explained.

The hospital as a whole will be losing just under two percent of its workforce. Though a difficult decision for the hospital, which worked with what the Friday statement called "outside experts" to determine where to make cuts, Pantages said the hospital is determined to keep patient care a priority.

"We strive to continue to provide exceptional care without exception to all of our patients," she said. "We made the reductions very strategically and methodically, informed by volume in the affected areas so that patient care will not be impacted."



In May, SECHC Executive Director Bob Johnson (left) introduced BMC's new President and CEO Kate Walsh (right) at the health center's reception celebrating their new electronic medical record system. Photo: Kate Vander Wiede

Workplace Violence Drill

Thursday, September 16, during evening hours

Moakley Building, 830 Harrison Ave.

The drill will test the hospital's response to workplace violence and will involve multiple agencies, including Boston Police, Boston University Police and Boston EMS. There will be many emergency vehicles and apparatus on campus during this time. Please do not be alarmed; their participation is vital to the success of the drill. Pedestrian and vehicle traffic in and around campus may be limited during the event.

Online southendnews.com

Our Fall Preview is so full of information, it's spilling over online. At www.southendnews.com, 'Ask Dog Lady' tells you what you need to know about owning a pet. Then peruse 'Holistically Speaking' to figure out how to stay fit this fall. Wondering how much it costs to wake yourself up in the morning? Our 'How much things cost' feature spells out how much you're dishing out for coffee, tanning and more.

While there, learn about the fight over two trees on Tremont St., Mayor Menino's endorsement of Deval Patrick and the winner of the Southwest Corridor 20th Anniversary raffle.

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Wondering what to do this fall? Look no further than the South End News facebook page, where our events listings have officially moved.



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The results are in Service days draw hundreds

BY KATE VANDER WIEDE
MANAGING EDITOR

Democratic candidates for the 2nd Suffolk State Senator, Hassan Williams and Sonia Chang-Diaz, did not have a close race, with sitting senator Chang-Diaz outpacing Williams by almost 50 percentage points – 76% to 24% with all precincts reporting. Hassan Williams was recently called out for his answers on the Jamaica Plain Progressives website. Vague answers on his beliefs, methods and ideas, as well as comments that indicated he did not support marriage equality were questioned by Bay Windows.

Governor Deval Patrick and Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray won their uncontested races

Continued on page 6



State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz (left) and State Representative Byron Rushing (right), both won their primary races. Photo: Kate Vander Wiede

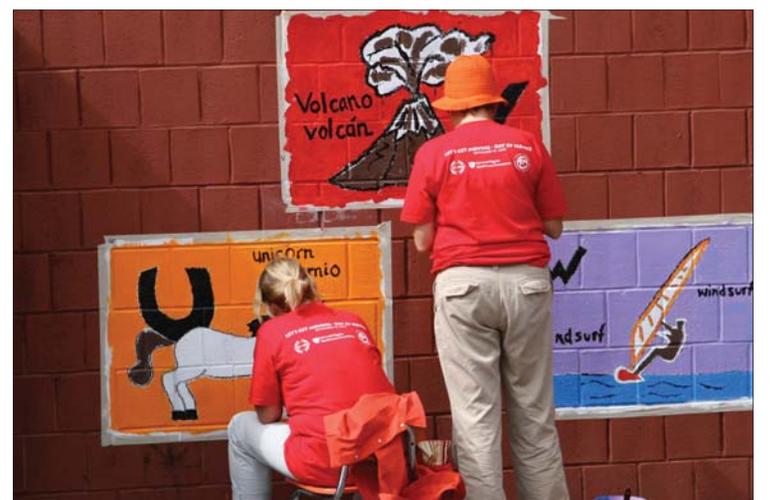
BY KATE VANDER WIEDE
MANAGING EDITOR

REPORTING CONTRIBUTED
BY EMILY CATANEO.

The William Blackstone Elementary School (380 Shawmut Ave) went through a transformation on this past Friday and Saturday as hundreds of volunteers flocked to the school to revamp the school's play area and create a library space.

The transformation came on the heels of another, forced one. After years of low MCAS scores the Blackstone, a kindergarten through fifth grade school, was named as one of 14 "turnaround" schools in the Boston Public Schools system last winter. It received a 'fresh start' designation in November.

This designation required



Harvard Pilgrim Health Care volunteers painted a bilingual alphabet on the walls of the Blackstone School on Friday, September 10, a day before the National Day of Service. Photo: Kate Vander Wiede

twelve-year principal, Mildred Ruiz-Allen, to be replaced, which she was by 34-year-old Steve Zrike

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