

THE FIGHT CONTINUES UNION FILES PETITION AGAINST HOLY CROSS

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Once Again Union-backed Coalition Challenges Hospital Expansion

By MARIANNE LOVE
Sun Staff Reporter

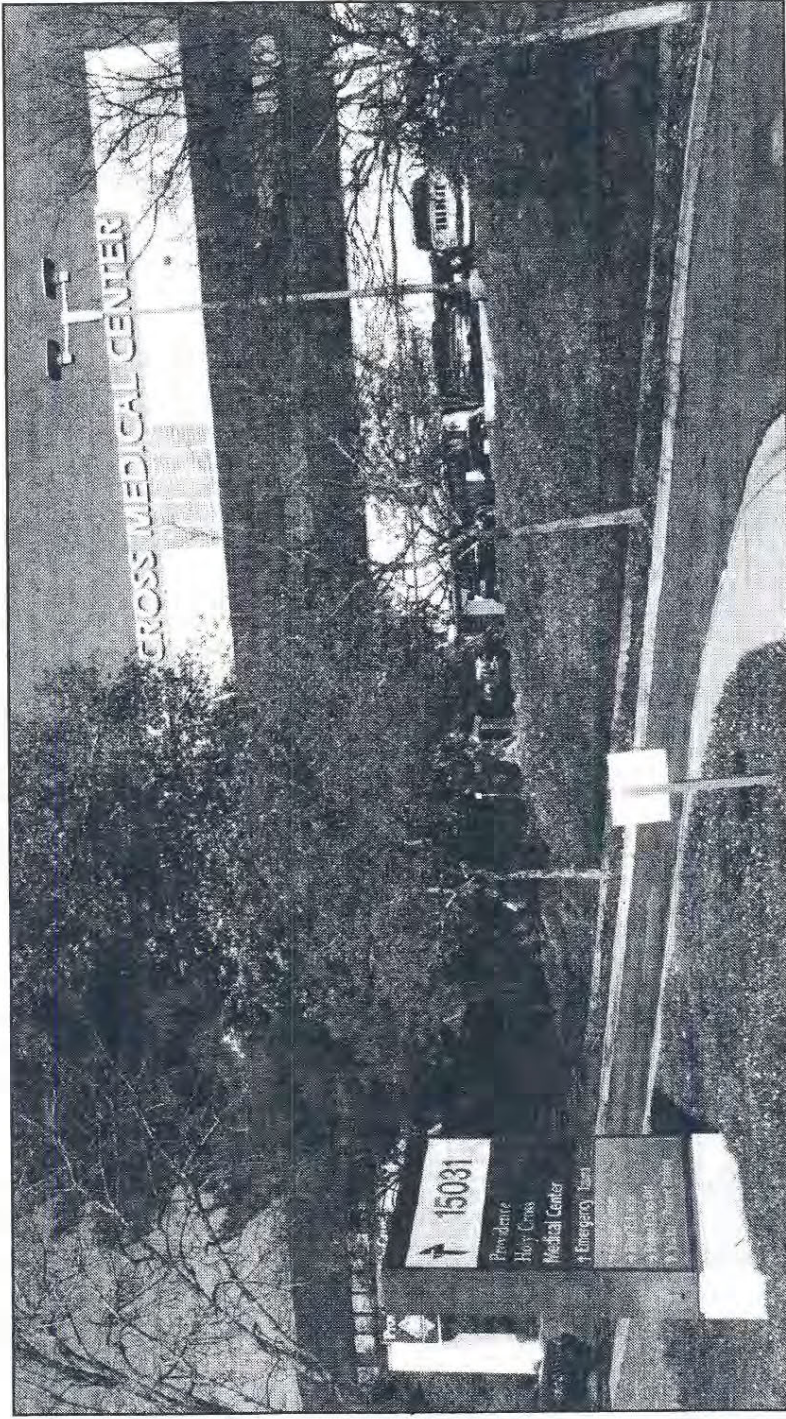
It's not over.

Holy Cross hospital official had hoped the controversy was over, but a service union-backed coalition has filed a petition for a writ of mandate against the city of Los Angeles demanding it force Providence Holy Cross Medical Center to conduct an environmental impact report according to California Environmental Quality Act guidelines on a hospital expansion to be built at its Mission Hills campus.

The hospital received a green light on Nov. 9 from the Los Angeles City Council to break ground on a multi-million-dollar, 136-bed wing including a neonatal unit on Rinaldi Street and Indian Hills Road in front of the existing hospital.

But this petition, filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, is an order for the city to set aside that vote.

If the petition is granted by the court, it could change the criteria of appeals of environmental challenges, said Alameda-based attorney Theodore Franklin, who represents the plaintiffs CARE, which stands for Community Advocates For Responsible Expansion at Providence Holy Cross and



Sylmar resident Nick Krall.

"The city of Los Angeles requires a two-thirds vote of the City Council to grant an appeal and we are arguing that it has to be a simple majority. Eight of the 15 Council members voted to grant the appeal brought

by CARE and Nick Krall and because of the city's arcane rules about a two-thirds vote, the appeal was denied and the project approved," Franklin said on Wednesday. "We want that changed. The rule should be set aside not only for this case but all future

appeals."

Franklin said hospital officials could proceed with construction of the project despite the filing of the petition for a writ of

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mandate.

"They can proceed because they have the approval, but it's at their own peril. If the court decides the approval was improper, at that point, they would not be able to proceed. We expect the case to be heard within six months," Franklin said.

Holy Cross Chief Executive Kerry Carmody he wasn't surprised by the legal filing and that he is moving forward with the city-approved expansion.

"We are getting ready to prepare the site and have submitted the building permits and we expect to break ground early this spring. We think the community needs the additional beds and we are committed to build the first green hospital in the state," Carmody said.

An environmental impact report is a more detailed review of project's impacts mainly to traffic, parking and air quality.

CARE members, which include a coalition of residents, nonprofit

community organization, hospital workers and union and religious leaders, questioned why environmental impact reports were required for hospital expansions in higher-income communities such as Santa Monica, Santa Clarita and Beverly Hills, but aren't required in underserved communities of the Northeast Valley.

In the past, hospital officials said they followed the city's guidelines and if they were required to conduct a more detailed environment report it could delay the project nearly two years, bump up construction costs another \$40 million and in the meantime people will die because of the lack of hospital choices in the San Fernando Valley. They said the hospital underwent one of the most "comprehensive" reviews of any medical facility expansion within the city limits.

And, although SEIU-UHW (Service Employee International Union) attempted to unionize Holy Cross workers a few years ago and was voted down, Carmody said he has agreements with 26 labor unions to provide workers on the expansion project.

"We never had a issue with labor. Some individuals have opposed this project, SEIU being one of them," Carmody said. "The trade workers are here, the project goes on, they will do quality work and there'll be no stoppage of work."

He also said construction trade workers will be from the local area and with the housing market in a slump, there are plenty of well-qualified union workers

looking for long-term employment.

Frank Mateljan, a spokesman for the city's District Attorney's office, said on Wednesday that the petition was under review.

Several local neighborhood councils came out in opposition of the project without a full environmental impact report. The Mission Hills Neighborhood Council turned out to be the only Council that wanted the wing built without requiring the more detailed report.

One major point of contention for some was traffic congestion on an already heavily traveled Rinaldi Street.

Although no one seemed to disagree that the San Fernando Valley needs more hospital services, Los Angeles City Councilmen Ed Reyes and Richard Alarcon, labor union advocates, were strong supporters of demanding a full environmental impact report, while Greigg Smith and Tony Cardenas said the hospital has done everything they have been required to do.

The closures of Northridge Hospital Medical Center's Sherman Way campus and Granada Hills Community Hospital have placed an additional burden on Providence Holy Cross.

Without the EIR, which could take 18 months to complete, the Providence Holy Cross expansion could be completed by 2010.

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Briefs

SUN VALLEY

Road Homicide

(CNS) - The body of a man killed with a gunshot to the head was found today in the middle of a desolate road in the Sun Valley area, authorities said.

The body was discovered before 2 a.m. on the side of Tuna Canyon Road just off the Foothill (210) Freeway. Sgt. Derek Brown of the Los Angeles Police Department's Foothill Station.

"We're completely out in the middle of the boonies," Brown said. "There are no streets around here at all."

The woman was about 30 years of age, said LAPD Officer Aguirre of the Media Room. Her name was not immediately released.

"This looks like it will be a long investigation because of the nature of the death," Brown said. The woman apparently had been killed elsewhere and had been dumped at the remote location, according to a detective's scene.

NORTH VALLEY

County Kicks 2008 Free Junior Golf Lessons, 4-18

The county of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation has kicked off its 2008 Free Junior Golf program with free golf lessons for children four-years-old to 18-years-old at its 12 county golf courses. Participants can pre-

FOR THE RECORD

The article published on Thursday November 15-Remembering the Valley's Heroes indicated that Robert Estrada a resident of the City of San Fernando served in the U.S. Marines, actually Mr. Estrada served in the U.S. Army from April 1959 to May 1962.

Man arrested for allegedly dangling baby over railing in LA

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Pacific Pharmacy Donates Beanie Babies to Emergency Department at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center



Holy Cross hospital staff accepted beanie babies from Pacific Pharmacy and the Valencia Town Center Pharmacy on Wednesday. The pharmacy adopted the Providence Holy Cross Emergency Department and its young patients who use the emergency room. The program was started by volunteers at the hospital.

Pacific Pharmacy graciously adopted the Providence Holy Cross Emergency Department and all the child patients that have come for emergency care during the recent holiday. A spokesman for Pacific Pharmacy said they cut back costs on their own holiday celebrations in an effort to collect money to purchase enough Beanie Babies to fill four large boxes. These Beanie Babies will be used to comfort the many sick children who will visit Providence Holy Cross Medical Center's Emergency Department.

Providence Holy Cross Hospital recognized Pacific Pharmacy with a special certificate of appreciation.

MORE LOCAL NEWS IN THE VALLEY

AR OR TRUCK?

