

Wednesday, July 22, 2009

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**NewsTribune**

## IVCH to close in-home, post-treatment care unit

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Illinois Valley Community Hospital is closing an in-home, post-treatment care unit effective Sept. 30.

Valley Home Health Services, a department at the Peru hospital for more than 20 years, is being permanently closed, hospital spokesman Gene Vogelgesang confirmed Tuesday.

Valley Home Health Services provides in-home nursing care for patients following discharge from IVCH, often following surgery or in-patient care. The department's service requires a doctor's prescription and nurses visit as often as necessary.

Sixteen employees, including seven nurses, licensed nursing professionals and nurses' aides, as well as two physical therapists, will lose their jobs, Vogelgesang said.

The department will continue to provide services to its 30 current patients until Sept. 30, he said. **After that, Home Bound Healthcare in Peru will provide in-home care.**

"The decision wasn't made overnight and it wasn't made easily," Vogelgesang said. "There has been concern about declining patient volume for more than a year."

IVCH undertook various efforts to keep the department financially stable but was unsuccessful. In the fiscal year just ended, he said, Valley Home Health Services lost nearly \$250,000.

"Even though IVCH is a not-for-profit corporation," Vogelgesang said, "the hospital can't continue to support services at a loss and continue to offer high-quality health care in other areas."

Vogelgesang said IVCH is trying to place the home health employees in other jobs at the hospital.

"A decision that results in the elimination of jobs is never popular," Vogelgesang said, "but the other employees understand why the decision was taken and we'll just have to move on."

Home Bound confirmed the agreement with IVCH.

**Kim Woolley, administrator for Home Bound Healthcare,** said Tommy Hobbs, chief executive officer at IVCH, had contacted Home Bound to research the possibility of working together should the decision be made to close Valley Home Health Services.

**Woolley told him in reply that Home Bound Healthcare had been listed among the nation's top Elite 500 Home Health Agencies.**

"Recently, we were notified of the decision to close Valley Home Health," Woolley said. "We look forward to the opportunity to work with the IVCH physicians in providing quality home health care to their patients."

"We also look forward to the transition of Valley Home Health's employees into our organization if they choose to come," she said. "Combining the two organizations will most certainly result in a smooth transition for the patients of IVCH."

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