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Allina Health announces changes to care access at Coon Rapids, Fridley Mercy Hospital locations

By KSTP

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Allina Health announced Tuesday it plans to adjust the services offered at its Mercy Hospital campuses in Coon Rapids and Fridley.

The two hospitals combined to become one hospital with two campuses in 2017.

The Unity Campus in Fridley will continue its focus on addiction and mental health, emergency and inpatient services, while the Coon Rapids location will expand its surgical capacity, Allina said.

To accomplish this, Allina said it is making the following changes:

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- All intensive care units will be at the Coon Rapids location.
- All surgeries will be at the Coon Rapids location, and some outpatient services at the Fridley location will move to other Allina locations.
- Inpatient pediatric beds at the Coon Rapids location will be converted to adult beds.

Allina cited several factors for the changes, including decreasing volumes of pediatric inpatient care at the Coon Rapids location and decreasing volumes of people being admitted to the ICU at the Fridley location. The health care system said it will connect with other children's hospitals in the metro "to ensure care pathways."

The Minnesota Nurses Association criticized Allina Health for the changes, stating that 63 full-time MNA nurses would be laid off from the Fridley location.

"These planned layoffs expose the cruel hypocrisy of hospital executives who claim that there are not enough nurses who want to work," a statement from MNA said, in part. "Nurses in these units want to work; they have worked at the bedside for years, despite decades of degrading conditions under Allina executive leadership that have put care and working conditions at the bedside in jeopardy. Hospital executives chew us up and spit us out, and then dare to wonder why so many nurses have one eye on the exit door."

When questioned about layoffs and when these changes would take place, a spokesperson from Allina Health stated, "There are nearly two thousand open positions throughout our system, and we are going to great lengths to match the majority of impacted employees with open roles throughout Allina Health. While we notified MNA as required by contract, it is our hope all nurses will accept a placement



“Ultimately, it is patients who will pay the price while Allina executives pocket their millions and pinch pennies on a corporate balance sheet,” MNA continued. “When there are fewer nurses to answer a call light, deliver medications, or help someone to the restroom, it is patients who will feel their absence. When a patient takes a sudden turn for the worse at Unity Campus and must take a \$5,000 ambulance ride to Mercy Hospital, it is that patient who will pay Allina’s bill. And when families in Coon Rapids must drive an additional 30 minutes to find their child a hospital bed, it is those families who will be left to wonder: if their child’s access to care is not the priority of Allina executives, what is?”

On Wednesday morning, a spokesperson for Allina Health disputed the ambulance cost claim made by the union, saying it was inaccurate due to Mercy Hospital and Mercy Hospital-Unity being one hospital, and patients aren’t charged when needing to go to the other campus.

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