



*Villager photos by Albert Amateau*

St. Vincent's nurses, hospital workers and members of the New York State Nurses Association rallied outside St. Vincent's Hospital on Jan. 28. They said the hospital needs a government bailout, just like the banks received.

**St. Vincent's still on life support, as takeover is off**

By Albert Amateau

The future of St. Vincent's as a full-service, acute-care hospital with a Level 1 trauma center and emergency room remained imperiled last week even as the state and creditors infused emergency cash to keep the 160-year-old institution going.

But the cash transfusions are not likely to sustain the hospital much past the middle of March.

Governor David Paterson announced on Sun., Feb. 7, that the state agreed to put another \$3 million into the hospital, and creditors who hold much of St. Vincent's \$700 million debt have agreed to put up another \$3 million.



The commitments came four days after Paterson said the state would advance the hospital \$6 million and two creditors, GE Capital and TD Bank, agreed to lend the hospital a total of \$2 million.

“It’s a very emotional issue and a very real issue for the people who depend on the hospital for healthcare,” said Patterson at a Feb. 3 press conference after a morning meeting of hospital management, elected officials, union representatives and Paterson administration officials who are working to find ways to save St. Vincent’s.

“I believe the stakeholders will have to come up with a workable plan for the hospital in the next four weeks,” said Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer.

But neither the city nor the unions have so far agreed to contribute any financial relief for St. Vincent's.

And Stanley Brezenoff, C.E.O. of Continuum Health Partners, the nonprofit group that runs the St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center on the West Side and Beth Israel Hospital on the East Side, last week formally withdrew Continuum's proposal to take over St. Vincent's. The Continuum proposal was to eliminate St. Vincent's acute-care and surgical services, as well as most of its trauma center and emergency room services, and run the hospital as an outpatient community health facility.

Brezenoff cited community and elected officials' opposition to the plan in his letter to the St. Vincent's board of directors withdrawing the plan.

Nevertheless, Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union, which represents the majority of St. Vincent's 3,500 employees, scheduled a public town hall meeting on Tues., Feb. 9, on the future of the hospital.