

Bayonne hospital deal is drawing scrutiny

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A watchdog group is training its eyes on the proposed sale of the bankrupt Bayonne Medical Center to a for-profit company to make sure that the buyer continues providing health care to the community.

IJKG, LLC, of Iselin, plans to acquire the nonprofit BMC for a combination of cash and non-cash considerations totaling \$41.6 million and to keep running it as an acute care hospital, but first the company has to satisfy the state that it will stay true to its mission.

New Jersey Appleseed Public Interest Group will be reviewing more than 3,000 pages of documents filed by IJKG with the state Attorney General's Office

designed to show that IJKG is complying with the Community Health Care Assets Protection Act.

At some point, the Attorney General's Office will schedule a public hearing in Bayonne — probably in January — to give the community and any interested parties a chance to talk about the proposed transaction, and Appleseed Executive Director Rene Steinhagen said she'll want more details about how IJKG plans to deliver needed health care services, "particularly to the uninsured and underinsured."

She said the group will also look at how the BMC endowment and foundation assets are to be protected.

Steinhagen said she is concerned that the state Health



JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

A WATCHDOG GROUP says it wants to make sure that the buyer of the Bayonne Medical Center continues providing health care to the community.

Care Facilities Financing Authority is giving a \$2.5 million loan to what will become a private entity. HCFFA Executive

Director Mark Hopkins said that it is permitted to give the money to a private company.

He added that the agency

dipped into a surplus account built up from hospital fees, "so no taxpayer dollars are being spent."