

Hospital workers get no-layoff guarantee

By Sam Newlund
Staff Writer

A tentative agreement was announced Tuesday to protect jobs for all workers affected by a proposed reorganization of Minnesota's state hospital system.

Under the agreement, none of the more than 5,800 employees at eight hospitals and two nursing homes would suffer involuntary layoffs if the state Department of Human Services wins approval of its reorganization plan by the Legislature.

In some circumstances the employee could choose a "buyout" with a maximum value of \$7,500. This could happen, for example, if taking an alternative job would cause a family hardship, said Charles Schultz, deputy human services commissioner. The agreement removed a major obstacle to the efforts of a variety of interest groups to reach consensus on the future of the institutions. The agreement is subject to ratification by union members. Tom Beer, lobbyist for Council 6 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, called it a very good agreement and predicted ratification. The agreement then would go a larger meeting of all negotiators who began debating the department's plan last summer.

The plan calls for moving most retarded people from seven state hospitals, now called regional treatment centers, by mid-1995. The state eventually would operate 105 community group homes, thereby offering jobs for many displaced hospital workers. It would close Oak Terrace Nursing Home in Minnetonka.

The regional center at Anoka would be replaced and those at Moose Lake and Fergus Falls eventually would be rebuilt or renovated. The agreement would guarantee at least one job offer for any employee whose position is eliminated by the reorganization, or job training that leads to a new position.



Today's meeting :

House meetings

- 8 a.m. — **Appropriations**, Room 200, State Office Building. Agenda: Department of Finance overview on budget.
- 8 a.m. — **Education**, Room 5, State Office Building. Agenda: School districts' financial conditions.
- 9 a.m. — **Appropriations, Health & Human Services Division**, Room 200, State Office Building.
- 10 a.m. — **Education, Higher Education Division**, Room 500N, State Office Building. Agenda: University of Minnesota President Nils Hasselmo.
- 10 a.m. — **Financial Institutions and Housing**, Room 5, State Office Building.
- 10 a.m. — **Judiciary, Criminal Justice Division**, Room 500S, State Office Building. Agenda: Sentencing guidelines.
- 12:30 p.m. — **Transportation**, Room 10, State Office Building.
- 2:30 p.m. — **Education, Education Finance**, Room 300N, State Office Building. Agenda: General education formula, property tax changes.

Senate meetings

- 8 a.m. — **General Legislation and Public Gaming Committee**, Room 107, Capitol. Agenda: Lottery legislation.
- 8:30 a.m. — **Education Committee**, Room 15, Capitol. Agenda: Presentations on secondary vocational education restructuring, and proposed graduation standards.
- 10 a.m. — **Judiciary Committee**, Room 15, Capitol. Agenda: Living will legislation.
- 3 p.m. — **Taxes and Tax Laws, Division on Income Tax**, Room 15, Capitol. Agenda: Discussion of corporate technical and administrative bill.

For more information on activities in the House of Representatives, call 296-9283. For more information on Senate activities, call 296-8088.