

# NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino  
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## County leaders issue update on Needles hospital initiative *UPDATE: Seismic issue solved; State extends deadline to ensure accessibility*

SAN BERNARDINO – San Bernardino County First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt and County Administrative Officer Mark Uffer earlier this week issued the following statement regarding the county's efforts to assist the struggling Colorado River Medical Center:

"The County of San Bernardino continues to work toward the transition of Colorado River Medical Center from its private operator, Lifepoint Hospitals, Inc. Although the transition from private operations may appear to be as simple as signing a lease with the City of Needles, hiring staff, obtaining equipment and opening the doors for business, in reality acquiring a hospital and obtaining the licenses, approvals and equipment necessary for operations is a complex endeavor," Mr. Uffer said.

"There are a number of issues facing the transition," said Supervisor Mitzelfelt. "Those issues are critical to the future success of CRMC and the County's ability to provide appropriate services to the community. Staff members and attorneys from the county, the city, and Lifepoint have been working diligently to address these issues and continue to work to resolve them as quickly as possible." These issues include:

- "First, the Critical Access License under Lifepoint must be transferred to the county. Without this license, operations of the facility and financial viability would be nearly impossible. This license must be approved by both state and federal officials," Mr. Uffer said.
- "Further, there are equipment and maintenance issues that must be corrected before the county can assume operations of the medical center. The county is in the process of completing an inventory of equipment and is evaluating the condition of that equipment. In some cases the county is negotiating with Lifepoint to affect the repair or replacement of that equipment.

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Another key hurdle had been state review and approval of the hospital's seismic capabilities. California has very strict requirements that must be met in order to operate an acute care facility. SB 1953 requires that all hospitals must meet certain seismic anchoring requirements. However, the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHDP) recently extended the deadline for compliance from 2008 to 2013 to ensure that Colorado River Medical Center remains available to the Needles community.

"The county remains confident that assumption of services at CRMC will be successful, but that process will not be completed until after these issues have been resolved. The initial plan for operating a limited acute care hospital of 6-10 beds, a laboratory, X-ray services, physical therapy, psychiatric services, and basic emergency care has not changed.

"In addition to the progress mentioned above, the county has also identified a primary care physician who is willing to set up a practice in the community," Mr. Uffer said

Supervisor Mitzelfelt concluded: "While the process may appear to be moving slowly, I urge residents of Needles to rest assured that the county remains committed to assisting the community of Needles with its health care needs."