



Metro Health says it outsourced housekeeping to prevent infections, not cut costs

Published: Thursday, June 10, 2010, 8:27 AM Updated: Thursday, June 10, 2010, 8:35 AM



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Metro Health Hospital on Byron Center Avenue.

WYOMING -- When Xanitos takes over cleaning duties at Metro Health later this month, hospital administrators expect the company's system to cut the risk of hospital-acquired infections.

So does Xanitos.

"The technology and system that we are using is unique for cleaning hospitals," said Steve Servant, Xanitos' vice president of sales.

Metro Health has contracted housekeeping and patient transfer services from the environmental service company. About 60 hospital workers will retain jobs under the outside company, which uses a patent-pending system to clean patient rooms.

It uses high efficiency particulate air double-filtered vacuums to remove dust particles, which can contain bacteria, from floors, vents and furniture, along with micro-fiber mops and germicidal wipes as part of an effort to stop infections from spreading.

Workers were told Friday about the change, which prompted an anonymous employee to suggest workers would lose pay and benefits.

The hospital and Xanitos said workers would see a "modest increase" in pay.

"The benefits are as close as possible to what they are now," Servant said. "This is not a cost-cutting exercise."

He said hospitals nationwide are concerned about hospital-acquired infections.

"There are some real costs associated with a single incident (of such infections)," Servant said. "The last thing we want to do is go in and start cutting housekeeping staffing. We're giving them the proper tools."

Hospital spokeswoman Ellen Bristol said administrators considered the change for some time, and believe it will improve service to patients.

Metro is the first hospital in Michigan to use Xanitos, a Pennsylvania company established by Graeme Crothall, chairman and CEO.

Bristol said the change affects about 60 workers. No one will lose jobs. Workers still will wear Metro Health uniforms.

"We want them to be part of the team," she said.

Workers were meeting this week with Xanitos officials. The changeover is expected to happen at the end of this month.

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