

NUMC cuts 9 top posts, adds nurses

■ **Eliminating appointees** allows more clinical hiring

■ **\$1.6M freed** for 37 jobs in new chairman's action

BY CELESTE HADRICK
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The president of Nassau University Medical Center eliminated nine appointed positions Tuesday to use the nearly \$1.67 million in savings to fund 37 clinical Civil Service jobs, including 17 nurses and medical technicians, according to the chairman of the health center board.

"Today, nine positions deemed unnecessary were eliminated, and it's just a start," said George Tsunis, board chairman of the Nassau Health Care Corp., or NuHealth, the public benefit corporation that runs the East Meadow hospital and related facilities.

"The board is taking the first steps in reforming and reinvigorating the hospital by eliminating waste and duplicity and investing in things that are mission-critical to the hospital," Tsunis said. "That begins with hiring 37 clinical positions, all necessary for the proper running of high-quality health care in the hospital."

Tsunis, who was appointed chairman by Nassau County Executive Laura Curran three weeks ago after chairman Michael Mirotznik resigned abruptly, said the NuHealth board does not have to approve the changes.

He said the eliminations were effective immediately and those in the jobs had been notified. "Their computers have been turned off," he said.

Some of the jobs eliminated

by NUMC president Victor Politi were attorney positions held by people with Republican political connections. Two positions were vacant.

Tsunis said, however, that politics was not a factor in deciding whether the jobs were necessary to hospital operations. The decisions were based on merit and need, he said.

The jobs eliminated were:

■ Counsel to the board, held by Republican elections lawyer and former county attorney John Ciampoli, \$160,000 salary.

■ Institutional research counsel, held by Karen Leslie, \$180,000 salary.

■ Lawyer in the general counsel's office, held by Elizabeth Faughnan, a former Oyster Bay councilwoman, \$160,000 salary.

■ Lawyer in the general counsel's office, held by Gerald Wright, former chairman of the Hempstead Town Board of Zoning Appeals, \$170,000 salary.

■ Secretary to the board of directors, held by Beatriz Fuschetto, \$65,000 salary.

■ Vice president of the Ambulatory Corp., held by Laurie Ward, \$300,000 salary.

■ Special assistant to the CEO, vacated last year by Craig Rizzo, former chairman of the NuHealth board, \$250,000 salary.

■ Vice president of revenue cycle, vacated last week by Vincent DiSanti, \$180,000 salary.

■ Attorney Eric Zeni, of Levittown, \$199,000 salary. Zeni served as NUMC's Freedom of Information officer.

A Lake Success law firm sued NUMC last year, alleging the hospital had refused repeatedly to provide information requested under the

state Freedom of Information Law. Responses to Newsday FOIL requests also have been repeatedly late, beyond deadlines set by law.

Tsunis said he wants FOIL requests answered as soon as possible. "The law is a relevant construct here," he said.

Ciampoli, Zeni and Leslie declined to comment. The four others who lost their jobs could not be reached.

Curran, a Democrat who during her election campaign criticized NuHealth's patronage hirings and lack of transparency, said through a spokesman, "This is why I chose George Tsunis as chairman of the board of NUMC. He is already proving that he is serious about reforming the hospital, cutting spending, eliminating waste and restoring order to NUMC."

NuHealth board member Bobbie Kumar Kalotee said he learned Politi had eliminated some jobs. "I was told this was for hiring more staff, nurses and to provide better patient care. If that's the case, I support the chairman, I support the CEO."

Jerry Laricchiuta, president of the Civil Service Employees Association, said union officials "have been yelling for years that the 19th floor [NUMC executive offices] is going to tip over for being so top-heavy, but we can't get anybody hired in the trenches. We've been asking for nurses, security, housekeepers. This is a step in the right direction."

Said Legis. Arnie Drucker (D-Plainview), "The hospital must use its resources to provide medical care to Nassau residents, not patronage appointments to the politically connected. This is a great step forward in restoring integrity to an essential public institution."



17 Sayville crosses

BY RACHELLE BLIDNER
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A Sayville church congregation has erected 17 white crosses on its lawn to honor the slain victims of the Florida school shooting and is seeking to help other groups create their own memorials.

Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ officials said

they are aiming to loan out about 600 handcrafted white crosses, 17 at a time, to other organizations.

Pastor Ray Bagnuolo said he wants the display, which was created Sunday, to make passersby think about how to prevent gun violence following the Feb. 14 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland.

"We have to make sure that