

EXCLUSIVE: Major Reductions Considered For Milwaukee's St. Joseph Hospital

I have learned that Wheaton Franciscan, the owner of St. Joseph Hospital on West Chambers on Milwaukee's north side, will announce a major reduction in services at the facility. A spokesperson acknowledges the company is considering reductions but that no final decisions have been made. Wheaton Franciscan is part of Ascension, a large hospital management company with several divisions including two in southeast Wisconsin. Among the areas that may be reduced are all inpatient services and surgery. Sources say the emergency room and some intensive care services for children are likely to be maintained. Hospital spokesperson Caryn Kaufman acknowledged the cuts are being contemplated but said my reporting the story now would cause considerable heartache.

St. Joe's would be the latest in a series of hospital closings or scale backs in the area near the central city. The hospital has suffered financially because many of its patients are covered by Medicaid which pays less than the actual cost for services. Kaufman said the company is considering which of its Milwaukee facilities should offer specific services.

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