



State board approves psychiatric bed shift between hospitals

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MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) - An Alabama board has approved a plan to move inpatient psychiatric care from one hospital to its sister facility.

The Alabama Certificate of Need Review Board approved the move from Eliza Coffee Memorial Hospital in Florence to Shoals Hospital in Muscle Shoals, the Times Daily reported. Shoals Hospital asked for state permission to move the license for 20 beds specified for adult inpatient psychiatric care from ECM to Shoals Hospital.

The board was told that all of the ECM staff would transfer five miles to Shoals Hospital.

"It's the most efficient way to offer this service to our community," said hospital CEO Russell Pigg.

Shoals Hospital operates a 30-bed senior care center for patients 55 and older with Alzheimer's and dementia-related disorders. The hospital plans to purchase \$250,000 in new equipment.

Hospital officials say they hope the move will be completed by the fall of 2018.

Shoals Hospital CEO Kidada Hawkins said in a news release that the move is an "important service and growth opportunity" at Shoals.

"By bringing together the psychiatric services for the community, we're not only better serving the needs of our psychiatric patient population today, but we're also developing synergies that will allow us to meet future needs for them as those arise," he said.

The hospital can move forward with a \$5.3 million construction project to relocate current second-floor departments to the first floor, and ready the second floor space for psychiatric care.