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SAENGER THEATRE • MOBILE, AL

State officials: Reopening Searcy too expensive

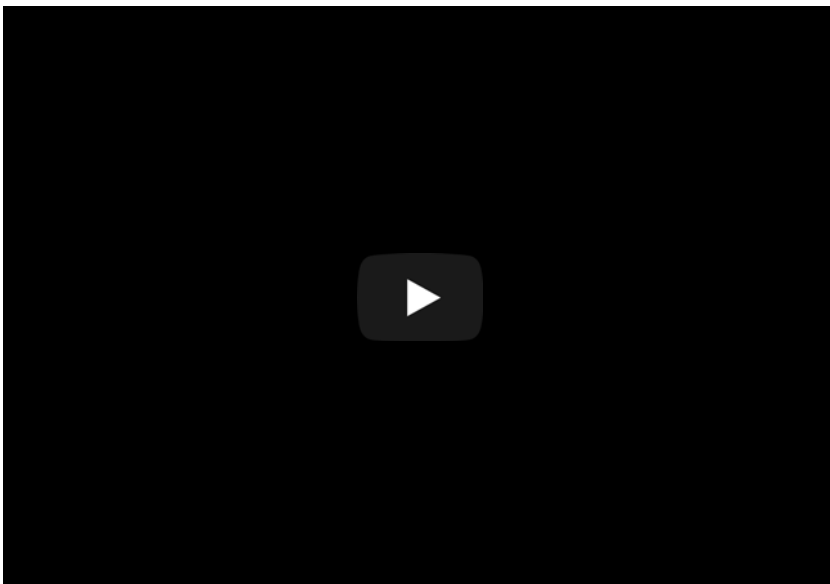
Posted by [Jason Johnson](#) | Sep 12, 2018 | [Bay Briefs](#) | 0 | ★★★★★

Contrary to rumors over the past few years, the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) says it has no plans to utilize the former campus of Searcy Hospital, the state-owned psychiatric facility in Mount Vernon abandoned six years ago.

Searcy and two other state hospitals shut down in 2012 as part of a larger shift in Alabama’s approach to serving the mentally ill. Just before the doors closed for good, there were 291 employees and 193 patients at Searcy, but since then the state hasn’t found a viable use for the 118-year-old facility.

In 2016, former ADMH Commissioner Jim Perdue cited “reopening Searcy” among his top priorities, but he was removed from his post by Gov. Kay Ivey as part of a larger administrative shakeup in the last year. Another thing Purdue had focused on was helping improve mental health care services in Alabama prisons.

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In 2017, a federal judge ruled the Alabama Department of Corrections’ (ADOC) mental health system to be “horrendously inadequate” as part of a lawsuit that also identified problems with overcrowding in state prisons. As a result, the state has been forced to evaluate solutions that could ultimately cost millions.

Earlier this year, ADOC began the process of “developing a master plan for long-term capital investments” to address the “myriad of issues surrounding the conditions of ADOC.

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