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Goddard House nursing home to close in September

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JULY 13, 2012

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The Goddard House Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain will close Sept. 8, the nonprofit's trustee board disclosed Thursday, displacing some 100 residents.

Board member Emily Brower said Thursday that the organization plans to work closely with the center's residents and its 135 workers to help them make a transition to other health care facilities.

"We are firmly dedicated to supporting our residents and staff throughout this process, and we have a number of measures in place to ensure a smooth transition," read a statement from Elizabeth Molodovsky, president of the center's board of trustees.

Goddard House's plans include arranging a job fair for staff, who also will receive bonus pay in amounts

based on how long they have worked there, Brower said.

The organization's facility in Brookline will remain open. That center provides assisted-living care in a newer building, but, unlike the site in Jamaica Plain, does not offer licensed skilled nursing care, Brower said.

The Goddard House was founded in 1849 at another site in Boston before it moved to its current location in the Shepley Bulfinch building in 1927.

"Its been a very good facility with a very dedicated staff," Brower said.

Needed renovations at the 85-year-old building would cost more than \$10 million and would require residents to be relocated while the work is done, according to the board. The building would need to be fully equipped with fire sprinklers by August 2013 to meet federal requirements.

"We do not make the decision lightly to close Goddard House Jamaica Plain, but we do make it with the firm belief that we can better support Boston's seniors by investing our resources in services, not updating a facility," Molodovsky's statement said.

The building is on 2 acres along South Huntington Avenue near where developers have proposed constructing nearly 400 residential units.

It is adjacent to a 3.5-acre plot that the Home for Little Wanderers plans to move from this fall, leaving behind a campus that includes a 98-year-old facility. A private developer has agreed to purchase that property at 161 South Huntington Ave., and has proposed to raze the site to build about 196 apartments. About 300 feet away, another developer hopes to build 195 apartments.

No plans have been made for the future of the Goddard building, officials said.

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