

Hillside to close Seneca County facility

Will Cleveland

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The Hillside Family of Agencies announced Wednesday that it will close its Seneca County facility by the end of the year as it will not renew its lease.

In a statement posted to its website, Hillside said there is a “transition plan in process for youth, staff and residential treatment programs at other Hillside residential campuses” after it suspends operations at the Varick campus.

The organization took over the lease of the residential campus in late 2004 at the “request of New York State Office of Children and Family Services leaders after a previous residential service provider ceased operations at that site.”

The campus is located on the north end of the former Seneca Army Depot and “currently serves 79 youth from across New York State, and employs 235 full- and part-time staff,” a statement said.

Hillside was founded in 1837 and the non-profit “provides child welfare, mental and physical health, youth development, juvenile justice, special education, and developmental disabilities services,” according to its site.

Some of the services will be moved to other Hillside campuses and “individualized plans” are being conceptualized for the residents.

Hillside wants to “ensure seamless continuity of care as those youth move to other residential campuses and programs.”

“Approximately 60 full- and parttime positions will move with those programs to other Hillside campuses,” Hillside said. “Varick staff whose positions will not be moving to other campuses will be supported in pursuing other positions within the agency or with other employers in the region, if they prefer.”

The transition is expected to be complete by the end of the year.

Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb, R-Canandaigua, said on Twitter, “Hillside’s closure will impact hundreds of families in the region. Moving forward, all stakeholders must work together to ensure young people continue to receive services & staff are provided options & assistance for future employment.”

The Varick campus operated by Hillside under a long-term lease agreement. The group’s other residential campuses, including Greece, Chili, Bath and Auburn, are owned by the agency. Those facilities “offer sufficient capacity to accommodate anticipated future demand

needed in Varick, and under-utilized residential services at other Hillside campuses.

“Over the last 14 years, we have created specialty residential treatment programs on the Varick campus that have advanced our field and improved outcomes for countless youth and families,” said Maria Cristalli, president and CEO of Hillside Family of Agencies.

in a safer and more updated environment.”

for residential treatment services.”

Group leadership decided not to renew the lease due to several reasons.

That includes trends for demand for residential treatment services, challenges of recruiting and

“That work will continue on other Hillside campuses, where staff and youth can work

retaining staff in Varick, cost-prohibitive improvements WCLEVELAND@Gannett.com