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Sykesville to discuss transfer of forensic patients

By Jennifer Jiggetts, Times Staff Writer

A public meeting is being planned for next month to discuss the community's concerns over forensic patients moving to a Sykesville facility, said Del. Susan Krebs, R-District 9B.

State health officials cited money as the reason for the decision to move forensic patients from Rosewood Center in Owings Mills to a facility at the Springfield Hospital Center campus in Sykesville, said Krebs, who attended a closed meeting Friday to discuss the controversial move.

The original plans for Rosewood patients called for a separate facility to be built at Clifton T. Perkins Hospital Center, a facility in Jessup for people with mental illness, said Krebs.

John M. Colmers, secretary of the Maryland Department of Mental Health and Hygiene, said there's no money in the budget to build a facility at Jessup, according to Krebs.

Krebs and Sen. Allan Kittleman, R-District 9, who also attended the meeting, expressed their concerns about the patients, who are being held because they've been deemed incompetent to stand trial and are not being held criminally responsible for their acts.

Krebs said she is very concerned about safety.

"We want to make sure our community is in a safe environment," she said Monday.

One forensic patient charged with murder had escaped from the Rosewood facility, she said.

“They took our concerns seriously and were open to a dialogue with us,” Krebs said of Friday’s meeting.

The Sykesville Evaluation and Therapeutic Treatment Program will be housed in the Muncie Building on the Springfield facility, near the Warfield Development Corp. The Muncie Building is currently undergoing renovations and will house about 20 court-involved residents who have been named incompetent to stand trial or not criminally responsible.

The facility will have more secure doors, fencing and security cameras installed.

Twelve residents will come from the Rosewood Center. The eight other residents will come from the court system.

In January, Gov. Martin O’Malley announced that the Rosewood Center would close next June as a result of having critical problems that haven’t been addressed.