

## Louisiana executive eyed as interim Holy Cross CEO

By Andrew Oxford

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A Louisiana health care executive was expected to be nominated as interim CEO of Taos Health Systems during a meeting of the nonprofit's board of directors Wednesday night (June 25).

Kurt Scott most recently worked as CEO of Louisiana State University Bogalusa Medical Center, now known as Our Lady of the Angels Hospital, a post he held for seven years.

*The Taos News* was sent to press before board members voted on Scott's appointment.

His nomination follows an announcement June 6 by CEO Peter Hofstetter he would leave the hospital in early July.

Quorum Health Resources, a management company contracted by Taos Health Systems and which employs Hofstetter as well as the hospital's chief financial officer, immediately launched a search for an interim CEO.

If approved by the board of directors, Scott would assume leadership of the nonprofit July 7, according to board chairman Ron Burnham.

"Mr. Scott is well-experienced in managing hospitals in the current climate of change, and has a solid track record in developing positive medical staff, employee and community relations," Burnham stated in an email to *The Taos News*. "He also has a good record of managing for quality and financial performance. If he in fact comes on board, he will be working with the existing and very capable senior leadership team, which should make this a very smooth transition."

In recent years, Scott grappled with drastic cuts to state funding similar to those now weighing on Holy Cross Hospital.

As CEO of Bogalusa Medical Center, he oversaw the hospital's transition to ownership under a nonprofit organization earlier this year after Louisiana State University shed a chain of safety-net hospitals.

Scott left Bogalusa Medical Center in May, according to a local newspaper.

Citing an anonymous source, the *Bogalusa Daily News* reported May 23 he was among four hospital executives cut from staff. A spokesperson for the medical center's new owner declined to specify a reason for Scott's departure in an interview with the newspaper.

Scott has worked in health care administration throughout eastern Louisiana for more than 30 years, according to his profile on the social networking website LinkedIn.

He has a Bachelors of Science in business administration from the University of New Orleans and a Masters of Business Administration in finance from Loyola University in New Orleans, Scott's LinkedIn profile indicates.

While leaders of the union representing health care workers at Taos Health Systems indicated they support the timely appointment of an interim CEO, they questioned the process already underway to recruit Hofstetter's successor.

"We understand that the hospital needs to move quickly to appoint an interim CEO to keep the day-to-day operations in place. And we support that effort for the interim. We need all hands on deck, so to speak," leaders of Local 1199 wrote in a letter presented to the Taos County Board of Commissioners and Taos Town Council Tuesday (June 24).

Union leaders raised concerns, however, that "the company who recommended or found Mr. Hofstetter, would essentially be leading the search for his replacement."

"Why not use this moment to lead structural change that goes all the way to the top?" Union president and nurse Walter Brennan asked county commissioners Tuesday, adding "we'd like you to get involved in that process."

Quorum Health Resources has been criticized for its recruitment of Hofstetter, who has served as CEO since 2009, and for its role in what union leaders characterize as the continued outsourcing of hospital services to contractors. Most recently, the management of staff physicians was contracted to a private firm, Apogee. The move prompted several doctors to announce their resignations.

"There has yet to be a public discussion coinciding with an independent financial analysis regarding the prudence (both financial and clinical) of continuing the management contract of Quorum," union leaders wrote in the letter issued Tuesday.

Burnham maintained Quorum's role in identifying candidates to serve as the hospital's next CEO is in line with its contract.

"In our prior experience, this process has worked well and the final choice made difficult by an excellent pool of candidates," he told *The Taos News* .