

Pediatrician Dr. Loretta Ortiz y Pino resigns as hospital's chief medical officer

By Andrew Oxford

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Taos Health Systems, which includes Holy Cross Hospital, is cutting an administrative position in a bid to curb its financial losses.

Dr. Loretta Ortiz y Pino is resigning as chief medical officer of Taos Health Systems April 10 as the nonprofit eliminates the part-time executive post.

Dr. Ortiz y Pino became the organization's first chief medical officer four years ago after more than 15 years practicing as a pediatrician.

But the job has become redundant and financially unjustifiable, interim CEO Cindy Bradley indicated in announcing the move Tuesday (March 17).

"We made the difficult decision to eliminate the position to help ensure the longterm financial viability of this organization," Bradley said. "Many small hospitals do not have this position and we felt we could no longer justify it."

The chief medical officer served as a liaison between medical staff and administrators.

The nonprofit includes more than 90 medical staff as well as over 570 other employees and contractors.

Administrators warn it continues to struggle financially, however, after years of financial losses which totaled more than \$5 million in fiscal 2013.

The organization has a little more than 20 days worth of cash on hand and administrators have indicated they are planning for additional losses in coming years.

Eliminating the position is expected to save between \$100,000 and \$150,000 each year, depending on costs associated with covering the pediatric care Ortiz y Pino provided, according to hospital administrators.

It also remained unclear what Dr. Ortiz y Pino, who has been a pillar of the local medical community for decades, will do next. She could not be reached for comment Tuesday or Wednesday morning (March 18).

Dr. Ortiz y Pino owned Taos Clinic for Children and Youth for over 15 years. She has also been involved in the Taos-Picuris Indian Health Service Clinic and Community Against Violence, among other organizations.

At Holy Cross, she served as medical director of the pediatric hospitalist program and helped develop the medical staff 's credentialing and privileging process, reorganize its peer review process and revise its bylaws.

Dr. Ortiz y Pino also founded the volunteer patient advocate program in Holy Cross Hospital's Emergency Dept.