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Jewish Hospital sale hearing draws big crowd

Business Courier of Cincinnati - by [James Ritchie](#) Staff Reporter

The first of three Cincinnati City Council public hearings on the proposed sale of **Jewish Hospital** to **Mercy Health Partners** drew a crowd Tuesday night of several hundred people but yielded little agreement among the parties involved.

George Strike, chairman of the **University Hospital** board, said he respects the right of the **Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati** to get out of the health care business, but he's "very concerned about the rapid course" the deal is taking. The pending deal – which would remove Jewish Hospital from the **Health Alliance** system that includes University Hospital – was first announced in July and could close by the end of the year.

"We do not want to throw away the great progress that University Hospital and the **University of Cincinnati** have made in meeting the health care needs of Greater Cincinnati," Strike said.

The Jewish Foundation is trying to take the hospital out of the Health Alliance and sell it to Mercy for \$180 million.

Robert Kanter, chairman of the Jewish Health System board, said Jewish had always been committed to the Health Alliance.

However, according to an advance copy of his comments, the 2006 departure of **Christ Hospital** from the organization "was a game-changing event."

"It was then clear that the Health Alliance had become a failed model," he said. "Like many other faith-based charitable organizations across the country, we decided that our mission could be better served by selling Jewish Hospital and using the proceeds to support various local charitable endeavors, including Jewish Hospital."

He also noted that in early 2008, Jewish Hospital offered an "exclusive opportunity to the University to take control over Jewish Hospital, either in partnership with another organization or through the Alliance." The period lasted six months and included "two concrete proposals from the Alliance that were withdrawn."

University of Cincinnati leaders have complained that the profitability that has made Jewish an attractive acquisition target effectively came through subsidies by University Hospital. Now the UC board accuses the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati of wanting to take the money and run.

Any destabilization of University Hospital, the board claims, could lead to cuts in services, resident training, education and research.

Mercy officials said they are dedicated to those areas. For example, Mercy Hospital Mount Airy holds 20 residency slots and in June offered them to the **UC College of Medicine**, said Dr. Leonard Randolph, divisional chief medical officer for Mercy, in an advance copy of his comments.

Jane Crowley, chief administrative officer for Mercy parent **Catholic Healthcare Partners**, said "supporting the **University of Cincinnati Medical School** and Medical Center in this transition is a priority," according to an advance copy of her comments.

She said Mercy and University Hospital have engaged the **Chartis Group** as a consultant to study the market and partnership options for the two organizations. A report should be done by the end of the year, Crowley said.