

# Hospital to end in-house laundry

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SANTA CRUZ — Dominican Hospital will end its in-house laundry operation in an effort to control costs.

The hospital's decision was prompted by an April 30 fire that damaged the laundry room, hospital officials said.

Since the fire, laundry service has been contracted out to Monterey Bay Academy, a boarding high school on San Andreas Road, which also runs a large commercial laundry. The academy has handled laundry from Dominican's Rehabilitation Services division since Dominican took over Community Hospital of Santa Cruz four years ago.

The 2,400-square-foot hospital laundry room suffered smoke damage from a blaze in air ducts be-

lieved to have been caused from a welder's or solderer's torch.

Fourteen employees will be affected. Efforts are being made to find other work for them at the hospital, said Dominican spokeswoman Penny Jacobi. Three employees have been matched with other jobs already, according to a memo to employees from hospital president Sister Julie Hyer.

Administrators estimated it would cost \$100,000 to repair the laundry and bringing it up to code, Jacobi said. That combined with a desire to cut costs in anticipation of health-care reform resulted in

the decision to close the laundry.

Hyer's memo said the decision was made as part of an ongoing review of hospital expenses. No decision has been made on what the laundry room will be used for, Jacobi said.

A core group of the most senior laundry workers will handle daily collection and distribution of laundry. Dominican goes through 1.6 million pounds of laundry a year, Jacobi said.

Monterey Bay Academy uses students and adults to operate its commercial laundry, personnel director Yvonne Hayes said.