

—Slug:.....COMM-0842.bratt.BMH\_Dougherty  
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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

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HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

#####BEGIN HED#####

1 BMH leader will not return from leave of absence

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2 Search ensues for new CEO as hospital works to appease  
3 state regulators' fears about the hospital's financial health

#####END SUBHED#####

4 TEXT BODY:

#####BEGIN TEXT#####

5 Brattleboro Memorial Hospital CEO Christopher  
6 Dougherty, on an unexplained leave of absence for nearly two  
7 months, won't be returning to his job.  
8 "The parties agree that under the current circumstances it  
9 is best for Chris to depart and for the hospital to bring in new  
10 leadership," the not-for-profit facility said in a written public  
11 statement on Nov. 20.

12 The 500-worker hospital, one of Brattleboro's three  
13 largest employers, named Dougherty as its chief executive officer  
14 in spring 2022. In the past year, he faced an operating budget  
15 shortfall and related questions from state regulators before  
16 announcing Oct. 3 that he was taking leave.

17 Dougherty, who previously led Shriners for Children  
18 Medical Center in Pasadena, California, hasn't commented  
19 publicly. In its statement, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital said,  
20 "Chris is proud of his accomplishments and grateful for the  
21 opportunity to have led the hospital."

22 "BMH would like to thank Chris for his service over the  
23 past three-and-a-half years and wish him all the best in his future  
24 endeavors," the statement said.

25 The 61-bed hospital will search for a new CEO, Chloe  
26 Learey, its acting board chair, said in a Facebook video. Until  
27 another leader is hired, doctors Elizabeth McLarney, an  
28 orthopaedic surgeon, and Tony Blofson, a primary care physician,  
29 will continue as acting co-CEOs.

30 Past and present administrators have blamed the  
31 hospital's fiscal problems on everything from too many unpaid  
32 patient bills to their own staff's rising health insurance costs.

33 In response, they have launched a hiring freeze, let go of  
34 six administrators and hired two outside advisers: Ovation  
35 Healthcare, a national support organization, and David Sanville,  
36 a former chief financial officer at Windsor's Mt. Ascutney  
37 Hospital.

38 But regulators at the Green Mountain Care Board have  
39 questioned the accuracy of the budget numbers and ordered the  
40 hospital to revise them or risk becoming the first Vermont health  
41 care facility to receive state intervention under a new law.

#####END TEXT#####

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