

# County bucks Genesis group

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NEWPORT — Genesis Health Care will no longer manage the Sullivan County Health Care facility, following an announcement from a Sullivan County Commissioner last week.

Speaking at a public hearing in Claremont last Tuesday meant to give residents more information on the county's budget, Commissioner Ethel Jarvis said the contract with Genesis will not be renewed and that the county is hoping to manage the Unity-based nursing home on its own in the future.

No formal decision regarding the home's management was announced at the hearing, although County Manager Ed Gil de Rubio said plans are in the works.

Most of those who spoke on the matter had nothing but positive things to say about Genesis, but insisted the county must now "stand on its own feet" in terms of running the facility.

Using a county-run approach to manage the nursing home will be nothing new to Sullivan County officials, who did just that prior to Genesis' arrival in January 2005.

Prior to 2005, the nursing home ran deficits of more than \$1.5 million for several years, figures which Genesis reduced

and ultimately eliminated in the two years it was under contract with the county.

Money used to fund Genesis' contract will be kept in the county budget, which Commissioner Jeff Barrette said will be used primarily for staff increases and development at the 156-bed facility. A total of \$450,000 will be allotted in next year's budget.

The nursing home section of the budget, specifically an increase in money used to pay nurses' salaries, was one of the lone points of contention among the commissioners and the members of the Sullivan County Delegation who were on hand for the meeting.

There was little discussion from the delegation regarding the remainder of the proposed \$27.6 million county-wide budget that was presented.

There was a great deal of discussion leading up to the public hearing between delegation members who felt the county had mishandled the current year's budget.

Now that the current figures have been presented by the commissioners to the general public and the delegation, the budget will need to be presented to the executive finance committee and then in front of the county convention. The convention will be held June 29 in Newport in the Lou Thompson room of the Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center.