

# Saint Agnes Medical Center tells Northwest Medical Group to move out of building

By Barbara Anderson

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[Northwest Medical Group](#), one of the largest doctors groups in Fresno, has been told to move out of its longtime location on West Herndon Avenue by June 15.

[Saint Agnes Medical Center](#), which owns the land and holds a master lease for the building, will not be renewing a sub-lease for the building with the doctors' group, said Saint Agnes spokeswoman Kelley Sanchez.

Sanchez said the hospital has plans for the building, but she provided no specific details. The hospital wants to "have a stronger presence in that (northwest Fresno) community," she said. The decision to end the lease was driven by the hospital's intent to "continue to grow Saint Agnes medical providers."

Saint Agnes, which is in northeast Fresno, has owned the property at Herndon and North Milburn avenues for 20 years, Sanchez said. Northwest Medical Group has occupied the building for about that length of time, she said.

Northwest Medical Group was notified earlier this month of the decision to end the lease and was given a 30-day notice to vacate. Saint Agnes agreed to an extension to give the group until mid-June to relocate, Sanchez said.

Calls to Northwest Medical Center for comment were not returned this week.

The end of the lease comes at a time of medical turmoil in Fresno. Northwest Medical Group has affiliations with [Community Medical Centers](#), which is a competitor with Saint Agnes for patients.

According to the group's website, Northwest is a member of Community Foundation Medical Group and [Community Medical Providers](#). Doctors with Community Medical Providers are members of [Santé Community Physicians](#), the largest independent physicians association (IPA) in the region and an ally of Community Medical Centers. Santé and Saint Agnes have been in a legal battle since 2013. Saint Agnes, which has an affiliation with [Saint Agnes Medical Group](#), [sued Santé](#), accusing it of having control over the health-care market and steering patients away from Saint Agnes. Santé has denied the accusation.

Dr. Daniel Bluestone, medical director for Santé, had no comment on the expiration of the Northwest Medical Group lease except to say "that isn't an IPA-related issue."

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