

Panel delays vote on Howe, mental health center; closures on hold

By

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A panel of lawmakers charged with recommending to [Gov. Rod Blagojevich](#) the fate of a pair of troubled Tinley Park health care facilities has delayed its decision until the state leader's impeachment trial is over.

That could take at least two weeks once the trial begins Jan. 26, said [Kent Redfield](#), University of Illinois at Springfield political science professor emeritus.

The bi-partisan panel known as the [Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability](#) decided this afternoon to delay the decision.

The state can't take action toward closing the facilities until the panel makes a recommendation.

The [Illinois Department of Human Services](#) announced in September it wants to close the Howe Developmental Center and the Tinley Park Mental Health Center in July.

The health care facilities share a 300-acre campus at 183rd Street and Harlem Avenue. Both facilities were stripped of their federal funding last year -- Howe for providing substandard care and the mental health center for lax recordkeeping.

The mental health center has been recertified.

Read more in the SouthtownStar tomorrow.

In the meantime, [read](#) letters from dozens of family members, local mayors, organizations and union officials in support of and against the closures of Howe and the mental health center.