

Study: State could face shortage of hospital beds

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BOSTON - The state could find itself with a shortage of up to 9,400 hospital beds by the year 2025 if a trend in downsizing and hospital

mergers continues, according to a study released Thursday.

According to the study by the Boston University School of Public Health, the problem is compounded in part by the aging baby boom

generation.

The number of beds is projected to drop from an estimated 14,600 this year to 12,000 by the year 2025. Meanwhile, the need is projected to grow to as much as 21,418

over that same time period.

"The whole mood in the state of closing hospitals to contain costs is going to make the problem much worse," said Alan Sager, who helped conduct the study.

Sager added that if the projections hold true, some patients could be denied needed care.

The study was presented at a Statehouse hearing before the Joint Health Care Committee in support of a bill that would require the state to identify hospitals that should be saved and take measures to ensure they stay open.