

Fla. Hospital Head Said to Give Payoffs

SEE ENTRY 13 APR 74

MIAMI, Sept. 12 (AP) — Sanford K. Bronstein, former head of the financially troubled Cedars of Lebanon Hospital, has offered to plead guilty to theft of \$525,000 from the hospital and to name politicians who accepted his bribes. The Miami Herald said in today's editions.

The newspaper said lawyers were secretly plea-bargaining over the length of Bronstein's sentence if he pleads guilty to 64 counts involving bribery and theft.

Bronstein has named nine individuals and claimed he made \$314,200 in payoffs for their help in obtaining approval of \$62 million in loan guarantees from the Federal Housing Administration, the Herald said. The money was used for hospital expansion.

"Bronstein allegedly has information of serious corruption and bribery involving

present and former city, county, state and federal officials." State attorney Richard Gerstein said.

Gerstein refused to identify any of the officials.

He confirmed today that the negotiations were being held, but added: "We will insist upon a jail sentence, and there will be no reduction of charges."

Bronstein, 57, was charged on May 22. He was forced to resign as the Hospital's president last March. The hospital is now under the supervision of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court.

Court records show Cedars of Lebanon owes \$12 million to more than 600 creditors, and has defaulted on FHA-insured mortgages totaling \$13.8 million.

The payoffs Bronstein offered to describe apparently related to checks drawn on hospital accounts and cashed by Bronstein.

Harold Simonoff, Cedars' comptroller who has been granted immunity from prosecution, has said that he helped forge endorsements on checks which he believed were needed to make payoffs in return for federal approval of the expansion.