

St. Pete Hospital Won't Be for Judges Only, Minister Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

February 04, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

A St. Petersburg hospital renowned for treating children with cancer will not be transformed into a clinic for senior judges from Moscow moving to work in the city, Russia's health minister said Tuesday.

Minister Veronika Skvortsova apparently tried to appease the public, outraged with Kremlin plans to turn City Hospital No. 31 into a clinic solely for judges of the Supreme Court and Supreme Arbitration Court, which are being relocated to the northern capital.

A separate clinic will be built for the judges and will serve other residents as well, Skvortsova said in comments carried by Interfax. No currently functioning medical facility in St. Petersburg will be turned into a clinic for the judges, the minister said. "That's over and done with," Skvortsova said.

The plans to redesignate Hospital No. 31 came to light in January with the publication of a

document signed by Vladimir Kozhin, head of the Office for Presidential Affairs. Skvortsova's statement came some three week after St. Petersburg lawmakers asked the regional governor, Georgy Poltavchenko, to prevent the hospital's redesignation.

Kozhin's official spokesman told journalists in late January that his office had excluded Hospital No. 31 from a list of potential sites for the judges' clinic after an appeal by Federation Council senators and city lawmakers. President Vladimir Putin signed an order in November to move the courts at an estimated cost of more than 50 billion rubles (\$1.5 billion).

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