

# The Boston Globe

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## Struggling R.I. hospitals hoping to see equity firm go

But they're wary about foundation's plans

By Alexa Gagosz  
GLOBE STAFF

PROVIDENCE — For the last decade, workers at two cash-strapped safety-net hospitals in Rhode Island have been trying to care for thousands of patients while answering to an out-of-state, private-equity-firm owner with a history of failing to pay the bills. Now, they're faced with a new kind of pressure: figuring out whether being purchased by a private foundation will make matters better, or worse.

Hospitals owned by private equity firms are struggling nationwide as the companies prioritize profits. In Eastern Massachusetts, nine hospitals owned by Steward Health Care are facing closures that could impact thousands of people. The company is months behind on rent, contractors have repossessed life-saving medical equipment, and state officials are scrambling to intervene.

In Rhode Island, two hospitals owned by Prospect Medical Holdings, a private equity firm based in Los Angeles, are in a similar situation.

In 2021, a 70-page report released by the state attorney general's office painted a horrifying picture of the financial situation at Our Lady of Fatima Hospital in North Providence and Roger Williams Medical Center in Providence, both of which have been owned by Prospect since 2014.

Since then, the financial situation has gotten worse. As of late 2023, the two hospitals

HOSPITALS, Page A6

## An erosion measure — or a pointed message

Advocates for homeless see rocks as state's way to keep camp from returning

By Spencer Buell  
GLOBE STAFF

CAMBRIDGE — For years, collections of tents sprung up on a strip of land near the Boston University Bridge along the Charles River. Strewn with tarps, camping supplies, garbage, propane tanks, and needles, the small patch of riverbank was home to about a dozen people at any given moment.

In October, a fire spread rapidly in the campsite, igniting the gas tanks and sending up a thick cloud of black smoke that could be seen on either side of the river. Traffic was shut for hours. No one was hurt, but 10 people were displaced, and in the aftermath, fire officials said damage to the land was extensive.

Five months later, there are no more tents, no more people; instead the sloping embankment is covered with hundreds of pointy rocks and boulders that make it even more uncomfortable to sleep on the ground.

The state said the change is intended to help

ROCKS, Page A7



PHOTOS BY DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

A camp has sprung up on the Boston side of the BU Bridge after rocks made things difficult on the Cambridge side.

## A first in transplants gives new hope

Mass. General doctors put a modified pig's kidney into a man

By Felice J. Freyer  
GLOBE STAFF

Seventy years after surgeons at Brigham Women's Hospital performed the world's first kidney transplant, doctors at its sister hospital, Massachusetts General, announced an accomplishment they hope will prove equally historic: the transplant of a kidney from a genetically engineered pig into a human.

At a news conference Thursday, doctors celebrated the achievement,

with one even breaking down in tears as he thanked his colleagues for their contributions.

"Every week we have to remove patients from the [transplant] waiting list because they've become too sick," said Dr. Leonardo V. Riella, medical director for kidney transplantation. "Today we are offering a glimmer of hope to many of these patients."

The kidney recipient, a 62-year-old Weymouth man, is doing well after the four-hour operation, which took place

on Saturday, but only the weeks and months ahead will reveal whether the transplanted organ will continue to work. Doctors will track his kidney function, watch for signs that his body is rejecting the organ, and monitor for infections.

Previous experiments have transplanted pig kidneys in the bodies of brain-dead people and nonhuman primates. In the last two years, two men have received genetically modified pig

TRANSPLANT, Page A7

## A HARROWING VOYAGE



REZA SAIFULLAH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dozens of Rohingya refugees, part of Myanmar's persecuted Muslim minority, were rescued Thursday from the waters off West Aceh, Indonesia, after their wooden boat capsized. It was unclear how many women, men, and children were originally on board. Increasing numbers of refugees are fleeing from overcrowded camps in Bangladesh. A4.

SARAH-ANN SHAW 1933-2024

## Journalist challenged stereotypes on race

By Joseph P. Kahn  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

When the public affairs program "Say, Brother" debuted on WGBH-TV in 1968, Boston viewers had never seen anything quite like it. Conceived following Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, the weekly show focused on issues and individuals of vital importance to the city's Black community yet largely ignored by mainstream media outlets.

Among the show's on-camera contributors was Sarah-Ann Shaw, a community activist who had grown up in Roxbury and took naturally to the role of advocacy journalist. Young but well-connected, curious and passionate, she would become the first Black reporter hired to work on a local network news show, joining WBZ-TV in 1969.

Ms. Shaw, who retired from the station in 2000, specialized in cov-



GLOBE FILE/1968

Sarah-Ann Shaw was the first Black reporter hired to work on a local network news show. In her three decades at WBZ-TV, she focused on stories marginalized by other media sources.

ering stories neglected or marginalized by other media sources. From Dorchester housing hearings and discriminatory banking practices to welfare rights, homelessness, and a women's rights movement rapidly transforming work and home life, she gravitated toward issues that mattered deeply to Boston's communities of color.

In the 1970s, during the school busing crisis, she became one of the few Black journalists reporting from the front lines. More important to her than stories of conflict and crisis, though, were ones that challenged stereotypical assumptions.

"I tried to do stories that showed positive events in the Black community," Ms. Shaw said in a 2007 interview. "I thought it was important particularly for young Black kids to see them-

SHAW, Page A6

## Man once accused of planning Ortiz shooting is dead

By Mike Damiano  
and John R. Ellement  
GLOBE STAFF

The long-running saga of the shooting of Red Sox legend David Ortiz in 2019 has taken several twists lately, with the arrest this week of a longtime fugitive and, in a particularly grim development, the suspicious death in January of a man originally named as the mastermind of the attack.

Víctor Hugo Gómez was found dead in a town outside the capital, Santo Domingo, according to local authorities, after disappearing late last year. He is the second figure in the case to have died under suspicious circumstances.

Authorities had accused him of planning the botched hit job that resulted in Ortiz being shot in the back while sitting at a Santo Domingo bar. Those charges were later dropped and Gómez was released from jail last March, although prosecutors were appealing that decision.

His body was found in a town north of Santo Domingo on Jan. 10. A defense attorney, Manuel Santos Paula, who represented two other figures in the Ortiz case, said Gómez was kidnapped and murdered, noting he had ties to the drug trade. A Dominican government official said Thursday that the cause of death was not yet known.

Ten other men have been sen-

tenced to prison for their roles in the shooting.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, Interpol, the international police agency, detained a 25-year-old Venezuelan, María Fernanda Villasmi Manzanilla, in Santo Domingo. In early court filings, prosecutors said she was seen on the night of the shooting in a car with men who were implicated in the attack. After she didn't appear in court, prosecutors labeled her a "fugitive" and authorities attached a "red notice" to her name, identifying her as someone police should arrest.

She was released from custody on Thursday and faces no charges, according to the Dominican govern-

ORTIZ, Page A4

The company building a 51-story tower over South Station agreed to temporarily shut down the project after a large steel beam fell from the site. B1.

A federal appeals court ordered a judge to investigate potential bias by two jurors who served on the panel that recommended the death penalty for Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. B1.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said a major Israeli ground assault on the Gaza town of Rafah would be "a mistake," underscoring the souring relations between the United States and Israel. A3.

Physicians say they're seeing an explosion of birth-control misinformation online targeting a vulnerable group: people in their teens and 20s. A5.



Peaking too soon

Friday: Pleasant, but rain late. High 42-47. Low 33-38.

Saturday: Heavy rain. High 50-55. Low 28-33.

High tide: 10:32 a.m., 11 p.m. Sunrise: 6:43 Sunset: 6:59

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