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Overtime Pay Is up at City Hospitals, with 6 Workers each Getting 80G in OT Last Year

Six maintenance workers each banked more than \$80,000 in overtime last year, records show. The Health and Hospitals Corp.'s overtime bill is up 46% from \$93 million in 2007, according to the Mayor's Management Report.

By Reuven Blau

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Six hospital maintenance workers each banked more than \$80,000 in overtime last year, records obtained via a Freedom of Information Law request show.

The hospital overtime king is stationary engineer Michael Murphy, who padded his \$102,356 annual pay with a whopping \$136,016 in overtime at Morrisania Diagnostic and Treatment Center in the Bronx.

City Hall has cut the number of health workers and maintenance staffers at the city's 11 hospitals and four nursing homes by 2,015 since 2010 as a cost-saving measure, despite union opposition.

In turn, the cash-strapped Health and Hospitals Corp.'s overtime bill has steadily increased, reaching \$136 million last fiscal year. That's up 46% from \$93 million in 2007, according to the Mayor's Management Report.

"There's no question that when you see a pattern of high use you need to take a closer look," said Elizabeth Lynam, vice president of the Citizens Budget Commission, a business-financed watchdog group. "In some cases there are abuses of the system."

City budget bigwigs have long argued that it's more economical to pay employees overtime than to cover the pensions and health benefits of added workers.

A hospital official defended the overtime, noting that it went up by just 2.8% last fiscal year.

"Overtime often is the most efficient way to accommodate fluctuations in patient volume, to meet contractual requirements, or to meet other unexpected demands," said hospital spokesman Ian Michaels.

Six of the top 10 workers who hauled in the biggest bucks were mechanics.

State regulations require a stationary engineer to be on site at medical facilities 24/7.

In the No. 2 spot was senior stationary engineer Jerry Illiano, who earned \$101,473 in OT at Coler Memorial Hospital on Roosevelt Island, followed by nurse Noel Balquin, with \$92,210 at Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx.



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Arthur France, a Harlem Hospital housekeeper, earned a whopping \$85,527 in overtime on top of his \$36,487 yearly pay.