Brackbill, Robert

From:

Peg McCormick Barron [pbarron@wpahs.org] Tuesday, March 06, 2012 2:13 PM

Sent:

To:

Brackbill, Robert

Attachments:

WPAHS chairs final.pdf

Please see the attached letter of support for the WPAHS-Highmark affiliation signed by the clinical chairs at WPAHS. Thank you.

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February 24, 2012

30 Isabella Street, Suite 300, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Robert Brackbill
Chief, Company Licensing Division
Pennsylvania Insurance Department
1345 Strawberry Square
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Mr. Brackbill:

We understand that the Insurance Department is currently undergoing a thorough review of the proposed affiliation of WPAHS and Highmark Inc. We both understand and respect that your review must be comprehensive and complete. Nonetheless, we respectfully ask that you also work to approve the affiliation quickly.

We are the physician leaders of the West Penn Allegheny Health System. Many of us have practiced medicine at this system, or its predecessor hospitals, for decades. We represent the nearly 1,700 employed and affiliated physicians on the WPAHS medical staff who strive to put our patients first. It is for this reason that we ask you to expedite your review.

Every day we hear the concerns of our patients and physician colleagues, and they both fear for choice in our community. It is no secret that WPAHS has struggled financially over the years and is at risk for the long-term without the proposed affiliation. If our system is left to fail, it will ultimately be a failure for health care in our region, which would be controlled by only one large healthcare provider. Physicians will lose the ability to choose where they practice their profession, and as a result, many could choose to leave the region. However, equally alarming is that patients would lose choice in healthcare providers. We cannot allow this to happen.

As physicians, providing access to quality health care is our priority. If the community were to lose WPAHS, it would also lose leading quality in many areas. You may not realize that **WPAHS** is recognized as a leading healthcare provider by many impartial third parties. For three consecutive years, WPAHS has been ranked by Thompson Reuters, in the top 20% of medical centers in the nation based on quality, safety and patient satisfaction, measured on only objective outcomes data, not opinion polls. Heart and liver transplant survival rates for patients who receive care at Allegheny General are the highest in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Most telling, however, is that according to *U.S. News & World Report*, WPAHS outperforms other local health systems in patient safety in nearly all clinical areas.

We believe we have a vital role to fulfill within our region and with our patients.

Our system employs 11,000 committed individuals. We support numerous local businesses. We donate countless hours to activities, classes, screenings and other events to benefit our neighbors. We hold true to our non-profit status in providing care to all of those who need us.

We believe this transaction will greatly benefit our system, and hence our region. We ask that your review will conclude quickly, and your approval of the proposed affiliation will enable us to continue to provide outstanding care in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Susan Manzi, MD

Chairman, Department of Medicine

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| Jana | Hera Magner |
| Tony Farah, MD | George Magovern, Jr, MD |
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| Organization, Executive Vice President | Surgery |
| Chief Medical Officer // /// | |
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