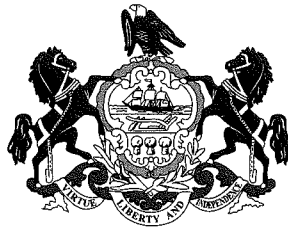


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MIKE TURZAI
Majority Leader

Room 110 Main Capitol Building
PO Box 202028
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2028
Phone: (717) 772-9943



House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

125 Hillvue Lane
First Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
Phone: (412) 369-2230

March 1, 2012

The Honorable Michael Consedine
Insurance Commissioner
Pennsylvania Insurance Department
1345 Strawberry Square
Harrisburg, PA 17120

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Commissioner's Office

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**Pennsylvania
Insurance Department**

Commissioner Consedine:

I am writing in support of the proposed affiliation between Highmark and West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS).

We are fortunate to have access to world-class health care providers in Western Pennsylvania, including those at WPAHS. While this health system has struggled financially for some time, the quality of care provided to patients has been and continues to be excellent. I want to be certain the residents of my district, and in this region as a whole, continue to have access to this important community asset.

I strongly believe competition among health care providers is essential for consumers, employers, and medical practitioners. Competition provides choice for consumers to seek care in the environment of their choosing. It drives innovation which produces better quality care for all. Ultimately, competition holds costs down.

If WPAHS is not preserved, there will be very little competition among providers in this region, and that lack of competition will not only negatively impact quality but will drive health care costs up. As costs rise, employers will have difficulty continuing to provide benefits, and some patients would likely go without needed care.

WPAHS employs thousands of Western Pennsylvanians in good, family-sustaining jobs. In a time when the country's economy is suffering and many Americans are out of work, it is essential that we do all we can to preserve good jobs in our community.

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March 1, 2012

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Therefore, I strongly recommend the Department to look favorably on the Highmark/WPAHS affiliation to ensure that Western Pennsylvania has a strong, competitive provider market. I would also encourage you to render a decision on the proposed affiliation as expeditiously as possible.

Very truly yours,



Mike Turzai

Majority Leader

Member, 28th Legislative District

Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Cc: Robert Brackbill, Chief, Company Licensing Division

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