

Brackbill, Robert

From: Neil Bhaerman [neil.bhaerman@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2012 2:59 PM
To: Brackbill, Robert
Subject: Public Comment by Amy Snow on Highmark-WPAHS affiliation

The following public comment is for the hearing on April 17th regarding the affiliation of Highmark and the West Penn Allegheny Health System

This comment is being submitted on behalf of:

Amy Snow
517 East 5th Ave.
Tarentum, PA 15084
(724) 226-9242

Hi, I'm Amy Snow, a patient hostess in the dietary department of Allegheny Valley Hospital. I've lived in the Allegheny Valley my whole life and worked at the hospital for eight years. I enjoy my job because of all the face-to-face interaction that I have with our patients- families that have relied on our community hospital for years.

Our hospital is second to Allegheny Ludlum when it comes to providing jobs in the Allegheny Valley, and we are the only hospital in the area. The continued strength of our hospital and the West Penn Allegheny system is critical to these communities; that's why we need this acquisition by Highmark to be approved.

As frontline caregivers and support staff we have a valuable insight towards what can be improved in our hospital, that's why we formed a union at our hospital last year to have a collaborative voice with management. We know that if we had better staffing, it would allow the dietary department and nursing staff to do our jobs more efficiently and it would give the patients a better experience. For example, with more staff we could better align when patients with diabetes get their food with when they have their sugar tested. Right now they sometimes get their food, but have to wait until the nurse comes around to test their sugar. By then, their food sitting in front of them may have gotten cold.

If this affiliation goes through, we know that our hospital and our health system will be financially strong and viable and we, as workers and caregivers, will be able to work with management to make the improvements we think will benefit patient care and our institution. Without the affiliation, we are concerned about the state of our health system and of healthcare in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Our patients, many of whom are seniors, want stability and they want a choice in their healthcare. The affiliation between West Penn Allegheny and Highmark will advance choice and competition and be beneficial for our communities, our patients and the 11,000 employees in our health system.