



DARLENE M. HARRIS

President of Council
Councilwoman, City of Pittsburgh - District 1



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

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Insurance Department

February 22, 2012

Dear Mr. Brackbill,

As the President of the Pittsburgh City Council and the proud city representative of Allegheny General Hospital, I am respectfully encouraging you to quickly approve the proposed West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS) affiliation with Highmark Inc.

The residents of my district on Pittsburgh's North Side are proud and fortunate to be home to Allegheny General, the major healthcare provider, employer and community asset in the area. The community has been loyal to the hospital for more than a century and the hospital has enriched the area through numerous outreach, employment and business initiatives. Allegheny General is literally a beacon for the North Side and the many individuals and families that have been impacted by its presence.

I have had several personal experiences with West Penn Hospital in Bloomfield, another important city neighborhood. Like the North Side, the people, businesses and landscape of the area have benefited enormously over many years because of West Penn's presence. With the reopening of the Emergency Department of West Penn a week ago, the community is once again confident that when they need emergency care, the caring physicians, nurses and staff will be there for them.

As a city leader, I am acutely aware of the fear among employees, business leaders and local government that this City and region could be left without choice in healthcare facilities and physicians if the proposed affiliation of WPAHS and Highmark is not approved soon. These are important non-profit community assets that give back to the people of Pittsburgh in many ways.

I want to add my voice to the chorus of supporters of the WPAHS-Highmark partnership, for the good of the residents, businesses and neighborhoods of the City of Pittsburgh. I urge you to approve the transaction as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Darlene M. Harris

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