

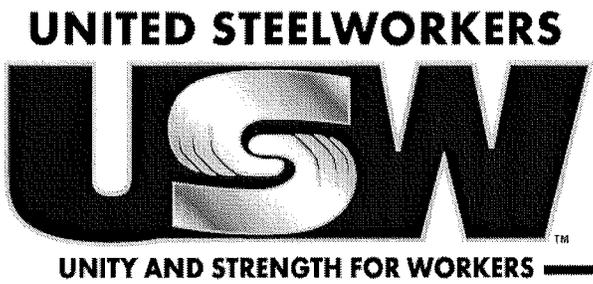
Brackbill, Robert

From: Moore, Colleen [CMoore@usw.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 22, 2012 11:04 AM
To: Brackbill, Robert
Subject: Attached Correspondence from USW President Leo W. Gerard
Attachments: 03-22-12 Letter to PA Insurance Dept.doc.pdf

The attached correspondence is being sent on behalf of USW President Gerard regarding the Highmark-West Penn Allegheny Health System alliance. The letter is also being faxed to your office.

Colleen Moore
USW – President’s Office

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Leo W. Gerard
 International President

March 22, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Brackbill:

President Franklin D. Roosevelt once stated that, "True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence."

The United Steelworkers union believes in those same principles, and that is why I am writing today. We want to express our confidence in, and complete support for, the proposed alliance between Pennsylvania's leading health insurer, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, and the West Penn Allegheny Health System.

The Highmark-WPAHS alliance promises to keep more health care provider options open to consumers. It ensures a higher level of competition in the regional health care marketplace. It paves the way for greater control of health care costs. It makes it easier for physicians to remain in this area. And, of great interest to our USW membership and the region as a whole, the Highmark-WPAHS alliance greatly benefits the local economy through continued employment of more than 11,000 individuals and the potential for new construction to modernize and expand existing facilities.

Unfortunately, incendiary rhetoric from the region's dominant health care provider – which operates its own health insurance arm, as well – seeks to cast dispersions and doubt about the viability and need for the Highmark-WPAHS alliance. This type of intrusion is unwarranted, unnecessary and unconvincing. Should this alliance not come to fruition, then Western Pennsylvania would be left at the mercy of a single monolithic health care provider, meaning that physicians would be told how to practice medicine or be forced to leave, costs will rise with the lack of competition, employers would struggle to provide benefits, and ultimately patients would go without needed care.

That scenario simply cannot be permitted to happen. Not here, not now, not ever.

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The history of the USW mirrors that of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Each was founded based on a desire for greater freedom for its people. Each has known challenge, strife, determination and triumph. Each has always recognized that, as FDR said so eloquently, economic security provides the basis for true liberty.

With those ideas as the foundation, I speak for my USW brothers and sisters in asking that the Pennsylvania Insurance Department work with all energy and haste to approve the Highmark-WPAHS alliance. By doing so, you will help not only the employees directly affected, but also the entire Western Pennsylvania region, to grow both economically and in greater good health. That is an outcome of which we can all take deserved pride.

I stand ready to assist in any way to bring about this desired outcome. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leo W. Gerard". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

Leo W. Gerard
International President