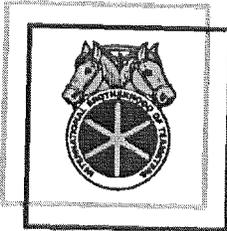


1364

Brackbill, Robert

From: Vito Dragone, Jr. [vdragone@teamsters491.com]
Sent: Friday, April 19, 2013 1:16 PM
To: Brackbill, Robert
Subject: West Penn Allegheny Health System
Attachments: Letter Regarding West Penn Allegheny Health System 4.19.2013.pdf



CHAUFFEURS, TEAMSTERS & HELPERS, LOCAL UNION No. 491

Teamster Building • 112 Morgantown Street • Uniontown, Pennsylvania 15401

Phone (724) 438-0512 • Fax (724) 438-4870

April 19, 2013

VITO DRAGONE, JR.
Secretary-Treasurer

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

Dear Mr. Brackbill:

As a union leader representing working people across western Pennsylvania, I am very concerned about the affordability of healthcare in the region. The citizens of western Pennsylvania have seen our healthcare costs steadily increase over the past couple of years. This is due, I believe, to having one health system become dominant in the market. The citizens, my union members, deserve to have competition to keep the healthcare affordable to for all.

I speak from experience on this subject I am the administrator of the Teamsters' Local 491 Health and Welfare Fund. I have always taken pride in offering my members the best coverage at an affordable price. In the past few years, this has become increasingly more difficult as one healthcare provider has become more and more dominant. Since my fund is self-insured, I see the increasing costs are associated with utilization patterns that have been emerging of moving services that were once received in my community hospital to another larger facility not in the community. Some of my members are now in danger in having their hours reduced or, worse yet, losing their jobs because so many of the dollars that were spent in my community are now being diverted to another larger facility.

I urge you to approve the affiliation between the West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS) and Highmark. Preserving the hospital system will ensure our region has competition that helps in keeping the healthcare costs affordable. Not only that, the competition will ensure all residents of the region will receive quality care; it will require all providers to treat the patient more efficiently in the most cost effective manner if they have the *choice* of where they seek treatment...not just have one health system driving where a resident can seek treatment.

Preserving WPAHS will save thousands of jobs in western Pennsylvania. Not only will this affiliation preserve jobs at the West Penn Allegheny Health System, it will help all our communities in the region stay vibrant; all of which is important to the economic health of the entire Commonwealth. My members' security--financial and personal--will be affected adversely if this affiliation is not approved. Their jobs depend on a vibrant healthy community. The ripple effect if this affiliation is not approved will be felt in the entire region.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Vito Dragone, Jr.
Secretary-Treasurer

VDJ:dmc

cc: Joint Council 40 Local Unions

AFFILIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS