

0156

**42ND DISTRICT
WAYNE D. FONTANA**

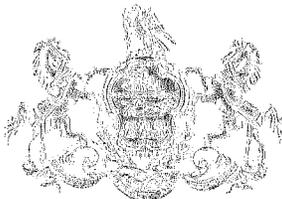
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Democratic Caucus Administrator



Senate of Pennsylvania

February 27, 2012

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FEB 27 2012

Pennsylvania
Insurance Department

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

Dear Mr. Brackbill,

As a Member of the Senate from Southwestern Pennsylvania, my district includes the flagship – Allegheny General Hospital – of the West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS).

Allegheny General employs nearly 700 doctors and 5,000 staff members. Each year the physicians, nurses and staff admit more than 29,000 patients, log over 68,000 emergency visits and perform more than 21,000 surgical procedures. The Hospital has a 20+ years formal partnership with the surrounding neighborhoods that includes a commitment to hiring qualified residents, purchasing goods and services from local businesses and improving the health status of the people.

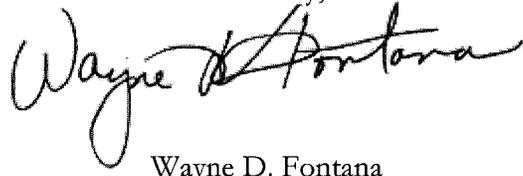
In addition to its role as a local economic engine and leading provider of excellent quality care, AGH is regularly recognized as a national leader in medicine. Heart and liver transplant survival rates for patients who receive care at Allegheny General are the highest in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This morning, heart transplant surgeons are announcing that they have implanted a totally artificial heart into a local man to save his life, the first procedure of its kind in western Pennsylvania. Earlier in the week, AGH was featured in national news reports about a 60 person, 30 kidney transplant chain. Innovation in clinical care, research and education are hallmarks of this important community asset.

These achievements and numerous others are all the more remarkable when one considers the continued financial challenges confronting WPAHS. Highmark Inc is the right partner to bolster the organization and to insure competition in healthcare in this region. Nearly every day I hear from business owners, individuals and healthcare providers about their common fears about the potential lack of choice and access to Allegheny General and the other hospitals in the West Penn Allegheny Health System, if the transaction is not approved quickly.

I support this transaction and urge you to approve the proposed affiliation expeditiously.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne D. Fontana". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "W".

Wayne D. Fontana
State Senator, 42nd Senatorial District

WDF/blb