

Comments to Pennsylvania Insurance Department

In support of Highmark's request for greater flexibility in investing in the Allegheny Health Network

We are the elected union presidents of the service, technical, and clerical workers at Allegheny General Hospital, which is part of the Allegheny Health Network. Together, we represent roughly 1,400 employees, from housekeepers to respiratory therapists to executive secretaries and many others who work hard every day to provide quality care to the people of southwestern Pennsylvania.

We are proud of the partnership that we have built with AGH and AHN leadership. Together, we are working to make AGH the best place to get care and the best place to work. We successfully negotiated union contracts that keep AGH competitive in the difficult health care market while also ensuring that frontline staff can support their families. We are empowering frontline staff to collaborate with management to reduce costs and improve efficiency and patient care. We are working to create workforce opportunities on the North Side of Pittsburgh, starting with a mentor program for high school students to learn work and life skills from union members in dietary and housekeeping departments.

It is vitally important to our members, our patients, and our entire region that the Allegheny Health Network succeed and thrive. Not only are good jobs at stake; it is also a question of protecting consumer choice in health care in Pittsburgh.

We are making progress to strengthen AHN through reducing costs and improving care, and we are confident that with the support of Highmark, our network will continue to be the highest quality and most affordable hospital system in the region. That's why we are encouraging the Pennsylvania Insurance Department to allow Highmark greater flexibility in making investments in our health system.

Sincerely,

Darlene Nicholson, AGH Service Employees Union Co-President, Quality Improvement Coach
Burton Brown, AGH Service Employees Union Co-President, Central Sterile Processing Technician
Clive March, AGH Technical Employees Union President, Surgical Technician
Patty Lindenfelser, AGH Clerical Employees Union President, Billing Coordinator