

**Brackbill, Robert**

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**From:** Matt Richards [matt.richards@seiuhcpa.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 12, 2012 4:16 PM  
**To:** Brackbill, Robert  
**Subject:** Re: Advance Copy of Bob Sylvester testimony  
**Attachments:** Bob Sylvester Testimony.pdf

My apologies, the previous email did not have an attachment. The testimony is attached here.  
Regards,  
Matt Richards

On Thu, Apr 12, 2012 at 4:14 PM, Matt Richards <matt.richards@seiuhcpa.org> wrote:  
Mr. Brackbill-  
Attached you will find an advance copy of Bob Sylvester's testimony for next week's hearing on the West Penn Allegheny Health System / Highmark transaction.  
Regards,  
Matt Richards

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Matt Richards  
Communications Director  
SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania

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**Advance copy of Highmark / West Penn Allegheny Health System hearing testimony from:**

Bob Sylvester  
529 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
New Kensington, PA 15068  
724-339-4929

Good evening. My name is Bob Sylvester and I'm a registered nurse at Allegheny Valley Hospital in Natrona Heights.

I'm here tonight to support the affiliation of West Penn Allegheny Health System with Highmark. Allegheny Valley is a good little community hospital, with a good workforce that takes good care of our patients. We've received a number of awards and recognition from the various accreditation bodies.

But even with our success, I'm concerned about the future of our hospital. Community hospitals like Allegheny Valley are a dying breed. I'm afraid that without the support of both West Penn Allegheny Health System and Highmark, that we won't be able to survive on our own.

Losing Allegheny Valley Hospital would be a big blow to the community. The next closest hospital for our patients to go to is 15-20 miles away. Most of the doctors' offices in our community are also affiliated with our hospital, so we'd probably lose a large portion of our primary care doctors as well.

Before coming to AVH, I worked at Citizens Hospital for 20 years until it closed. Citizens was one of the top employers in New Kensington and it left a large hole in the fabric of our community when it closed. Hundreds of people were suddenly unemployed. Some got jobs at AVH like me, but others moved. One friend of mine moved to Virginia because she couldn't find work here. And as the population declined, so did the tax base, eventually contributing to cuts in public services like transportation.

New Kensington became a different town when Citizens closed, and I don't want to see the same thing happen to Natrona Heights. We need the Pennsylvania Insurance Department to approve this affiliation between Highmark and West Penn Allegheny, and we need you to do it quickly.