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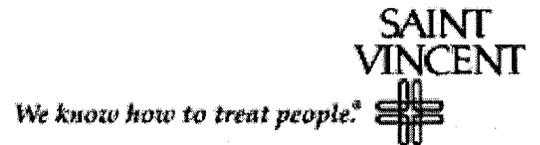
Brackbill, Robert

From: Scott A. Whalen, President & CEO [SAWhalen@svhs.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2013 2:29 PM
To: Brackbill, Robert
Subject: Saint Vincent Letter of Support
Attachments: Scott letter to Robert Brackbill.pdf

Mr. Brackbill,

Please accept this letter of support of the Highmark/West Penn Allegheny transaction.

Scott Whalen, PhD, FACHE
President and CEO
Saint Vincent Health System
Erie, PA



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

April 17, 2013

Mr. Brackbill,

Patients throughout the state of Pennsylvania deserve to choose who they want as their physician and in what hospital they want to receive their care. This has never been a question. Until now. The health care landscape has drastically changed, particularly in western Pennsylvania.

As the CEO of Saint Vincent Health System, a tertiary care hospital in Erie, Pennsylvania which is currently in the process of joining the Highmark Integrated Delivery Network (IDN), I find it necessary to voice my opinion and support for the proposed partnership between Highmark and West Penn Allegheny Health System.

The support for this partnership goes beyond capturing market share. It will specifically provide consumer choice. It will also result in lower health care costs and it will preserve thousands of jobs and the overall economic vitality of the Pittsburgh region and other areas of western Pennsylvania. Without approval, consumers will be forced to select a single, high-priced health care provider, which is on the verge of creating a monopoly in Pittsburgh and beyond. To approve a partnership that includes Highmark and West Penn Allegheny Health System will not only guarantee that consumers have access to the best doctors and facilities, they will have access to affordable health care-right where they live and close to home.

Saint Vincent Health System searched for the right partner in this time of health care reform and the Highmark IDN offered a means to strengthen our hospital, increase the number of providers and improve our system so that our residents could receive health care in their own community. The IDN is not intended to become a referral path to Pittsburgh hospitals.

As a potential partner, Saint Vincent remains committed to Highmark's vision for the IDN and their goal to provide the best health care delivery network possible for western Pennsylvania. I urge you to approve the Highmark-West Penn proposal.

Thank you for consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Whalen".

Scott Whalen, Phd, FACHE
President & CEO
Saint Vincent Health System
225 West 25th Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16504
814-452-5111