

Brackbill, Robert

From: Brackbill, Robert
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2012 3:30 PM
To: 'Chronister, Ronald'
Subject: UPE/Highmark Form A Filing: Follow-Up Public Comment from Ms. Bittner

Mr. Chronister,

The following public comment concerning the subject filing is being forwarded to you for appropriate response.

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From: pearlreapaf@comcast.net [<mailto:pearlreapaf@comcast.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2012 2:47 PM
To: Brackbill, Robert
Subject: Highmark / West Penn merger

Good Afternoon Bob,

Every day there is something new in papers that endorses my opinion on why Highmark and West Penn Hospital systems should not be merged as joint ventures. Please have the group that is going through all the public opinion to take the following into consideration. People at the grassroots level have the best view.

I still do not go for it and will most likely have a very difficult time accepting it when it does get approval. I know it will because why would Highmark be investing all the money that they are on establishing new companies to handle the hospitals they are buying up starting with WestPenn/Allegheny if they weren't going to get approved? This is very similar to when they were in talks with Independence Blue Cross. They spent millions and hundreds of man hours on negotiations just pull up stakes at the last minute and cut off the deal. All Highmark wanted and Independence want was time to trade procedural secrets between each other. Each one had some processes better than the other and they wanted to share.

So over the past few years Highmark has eliminated insurance coverages, and employees with the reasoning of saving money. The coverages Adult Basic and Chips were eliminated because the state could no longer support it and Highmark stated they could not financially support it on their on. The same reason was used for Adult Basic. The difference with Adult Basic was even though Highmark could not afford to support the program but thought nothing about offering the people who are at the bottom of the income ladder a new coverage and charge them a premium that was double of what they were spending before. Highmark can't find

the money to sponsor their program but they are quick to expect the people who need help to go and find the extra money if they want coverage. Should that kind of logic handle the running of all these various medical malls, hospitals, medical supply warehouses,?

They layed

off thousands of employees between 2009 and 2011. In 2011 alone there were hundreds and it was handled with such confusion and disorganization none of the employees could get a straight answer from anyone who was in charge. There was no consistency in how anyone's departure handled. Now they are hiring for the positions that were supposedly eliminated a year ago. Reminds me of two people re-arranging the furniture in a room, "no it doesn't look good there, put it here, no wait, over there. yea! no, back over there".

Some

how Highmark has all this money to help out these hospitals, form new companies, break ground for medical malls, and have a medical van go around on the golf course on the pro tour. But it is perfectly alright that they leave the needed with insurance, terminated employment for employees who have worked for them for 15 or more years. Some of the people terminated had 30-40 years. and unfortunately once their COBRA coverage is over they have nothing while there are others who were not there as long but were older will have coverage. Can you image what those employees feel like. (hint:= hookers)

I have been

called a "puppy collector" They are people who are naturally drawn to others who can use a friend to lend a hand to help them with anything and everything but mostly to listen. The key thing about being a puppy collector is knowing how long of a leash to put the puppy on. Well now I want to make sure the kennel treats the puppies well. I do not want anyone to be treated the same way as all my friends, co-workers and myself like we were. When 10 people from three units with each unit no larger than 25 people out for mental/nervous problems and 5 others getting outpatient treatment and they are all from the same floor. That tells you something is definitely wrong with the system.

Please

sir, take this into consideration with the rest of the committee who is deciding. No one regardless of the economy , should have to mentally and emotionally pistol whipped at work. No one deserves that kind of treatment.

Peg Bittner

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a person makes a title, a title does not make a person, I respect a person