

## Citizen Response to Media Requests

November 16, 2009

### Thoughts about the future of Lutheran Medical Center and Good Samaritan Medical Center hospitals:

As the volunteer spokespersons representing the over 9,000 individuals who signed and registered opposition to the transfer of sponsorship to the Community First Foundation and Sisters of Charity, we are terribly disappointed with the most recent ruling by the Colorado Attorney General which allows the Sisters of Charity to gain control of Lutheran Medical Center and Good Samaritan's Medical Center and change them from non-sectarian to Catholic hospitals.

**Lost:** All **profits** from the two hospitals will now be under the final control of the Board of Directors of the Sisters of Charity, a sectarian order based in Leavenworth, KS. **Lost:** Personal and private choice. Women's health and End of Life issues will now be **controlled** by the Ethical and Religious Directives of the Catholic Church.

Of particular concern to many of the residents of Jefferson County, the *freedom of personal choice* in these two areas will be lost when Lutheran Medical Center is changed from non-sectarian to Catholic. This will mean that Jefferson County will only have Catholic hospitals offering services, especially on the west side of the metro area. *The two hospitals in Jefferson County, Lutheran Medical Center and St. Anthony's (being built at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Union) will be Catholic hospitals. Residents of JeffCo will no longer have a choice in hospitals or be able to make personal choices about the types of family-planning services and end-of-life services that they wish to receive, if they become patients in either of these hospitals.* The same concern is shared by many residents served by Good Samaritan Medical Center in Lafayette, Colorado, a suburb that is north of Denver.

We would encourage people who use doctors who serve on the staffs of these Catholic hospitals to 1) become familiar with the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERDs) of the Catholic Church (available at [www.SaveLutheranMedicalCenter.org](http://www.SaveLutheranMedicalCenter.org)), 2) assess how the ERDs might affect their health care choices and needs, 3) make their wishes known to their health care providers, and 4) as necessary, make the appropriate adjustments to your legal documents that are recommended by those health care professionals that you trust. ***Become informed, not surprised, by what will happen to the health care services that will be imposed upon patients by the change in sponsorship, and management control, of these two hospitals.***

Although Exempla provided some information initially, during the time leading up to the Arbitration and subsequent ruling by the arbitrator, *our Citizens' Volunteer Group was the only group that consistently provided any information to the public* about what was going on or what could happen to our hospitals. Through our small ads, 13 local community meetings and factual information to the media, the Citizens' Volunteer Group was able to collect 9,383 signatures of individuals who opposed the transfer of the hospitals to the Sisters. We ended our collection of signatures in early March, 2009 when the Binding Arbitration Process began. We believe that for every signature collected, there was at least one other person who became informed about the proposed actions by Community First Foundation, Sisters of Charity, and Exempla.

### **Some additional thoughts:**

It will be interesting to see what happens to the court case in Boulder regarding end of life issues now that the two hospitals are bound by the ERDs of the Catholic Church.

Caution for patients using these facilities in the future: Be sure you know and understand the Ethical and Religious Directives of the Catholic Church as far as health care is concerned. In regard to End of Life directives, you will be controlled by these unless your End of Life directives are clearly stated and on file with your doctors and the hospital OR choose doctors who are on the staff of hospitals that are non-sectarian. (Swedish, Rose, University Hospital, Boulder Community Hospital, and others)

If you are planning to make donations to a non-profit group, be sure you know the bylaws and intent of that group. Realize that, depending on who is on the Board for that group, the name, direction, purpose of the organization can change. Keep current with what is going on with that group. No one has a crystal ball, of course, but pay attention regularly to who is in charge and what their philosophy and commitment is toward the non-profit. This can change, and did change, in the case of our Lutheran Medical Center Foundation being changed to Community First Foundation with all the ramifications thereto (name change, charitable-purpose change, intent change).