

June 26, 2008

Vernon Ritzman, M.D.
8550 W. 38th Avenue
Suite 206
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

Dear Dr. Ritzman,

As the Former President and CEO of the Colorado Health and Hospital Association and a life long resident of Jefferson County having lived in Arvada, Wheat Ridge, and currently Lakewood and whose family has used Lutheran Medical Center for years, I am writing you to request your serious reconsideration of your decision to sell Lutheran Medical Center(Lutheran) to the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System(SCLHS). Having worked in health care for the Association for over 30 years specifically serving Colorado's hospitals, I have both been a part of and observed the tremendous change in hospital and health care services. Some of the changes have been good, others not so good. This potential change clearly falls in the "not so good" category.

I am sure that you are receiving numerous letters regarding this potential change in ownership. I will let others make the legal argument about why this change should not occur. My comments focus on the public and health policy aspects of this decision. Given my years of experience in both public and health policy, it is my opinion that the potential sale of Lutheran to SCLHS is bad public and health policy. From the perspective of public policy and service to the community changing from a "full service" non sectarian community hospital to a catholic controlled and owned hospital where restrictions on services and end of life care will occur is bad public policy. Lutheran Medical Center is the only non-profit, non sectarian, community hospital on the entire west side of the metro area. If this sale proceeds, it means that residents of Jefferson County and the area served by Lutheran who are impacted by the catholic restrictions on services and those who wish to have their "living wills" be carried out as intended and not influenced by catholic doctrine will have to get care elsewhere in the metropolitan area. This will very likely be some distance from their home and perhaps require a change in physician which is not easy in today's health care insurance and physician shortage environment. Lutheran Medical Center and its Boards have a long historical commitment to providing a full service community hospital since transforming from a TB hospital in the mid 1950's. They have received broad, continuous and strong community support as a result of this commitment. Sale to the SCLHS in addition to being bad public and health policy violates this historic, long term commitment.

From a health policy perspective, having the Community First Foundation(CFF) financially involved in the care of those required to seek services at another facility or, as

been suggested, constructing a facility where the services and restrictions not available at Lutheran are provided is an unnecessary waste and duplication of valuable community health resources and dollars. The resources are there, they are currently available, there is no real reason to change ownership and to have any additional expenditure made by CFF as a result of a change in ownership is ridiculous. It is poor health policy!

If it is necessary for financial reasons to sell Lutheran Medical Center and Good Samaritan Hospital, there are other entities which I am sure would be very interested in such a sale which would not result in the discontinuance of either facility as “full service”, non sectarian, community hospitals. From a public and health policy perspective this makes far more sense than the option currently being considered.

Last, there is some community perception that the sale, in part, is being driven by the desire of the CFF officers and Board to become one of the largest foundations in Colorado. If there is even a shed of reality to this perception, the sale is absolutely inappropriate for this reason.

Sincerely,

Larry H. Wall
Former President and CEO
Colorado Health and Hospital Association