

11-039 thru 11-053

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HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Dale Galassie, Chairman  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
Second Floor  
525 West Jefferson Street  
Springfield, IL 62761

Re: Merger of Resurrection Health Care and Provena Health

Dear Chairman Galassie and Board Members:

As religious leaders, we value the dignity and rights of workers. Each of our faith traditions strongly affirms the right of workers to organize unions so that they may support their families and improve their lives. We also believe that this provides a better environment for them to do their work, share their skills, and consequently helps the overall mission of the institutions for which they work.

It is this commitment to the rights of workers that prompts us to comment on the proposed merger of Resurrection Health Care and Provena Health. We ask the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to ensure that the newly-created health care network demonstrate genuine respect for its employees' rights and thus take an essential step for improving the quality of care for patients.

Over the years we have supported the employees of Resurrection Health Care (RHC) who have been working with AFSCME Council 31 to form a union in order to improve their work environment and the quality of care they provide patients. Unfortunately, Resurrection management has opposed this effort, creating an atmosphere of fear throughout the hospitals which makes free and open discussion of unionization impossible.

Most recently, we worked with the nurses at Our Lady of the Resurrection Medical Center, repeatedly urging Resurrection management to respect nurses' right to organize and follow the guidelines for a fair union election process as outlined in recent documents from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Unfortunately, Resurrection management ignored these appeals. Nurses who supported the union were interrogated, coerced, prevented from speaking to one another, threatened with loss of benefits, and told the hospital would close.

Now the proposed merger offers us hope that these policies will be halted by new management. In the interest of promoting improved access and quality of care, we hope the Board will urge that the resources now spent on undermining employees' efforts to form a union will instead go toward patient care and that the new management will respect and listen to their most valuable resource – frontline employees.

Thank you very much for your consideration. We hold you in our prayers as you discern how to provide the best health care for patients and the best environment in which all workers can provide that care.

Fr. Larry Dowling, Pastor  
St. Agatha Catholic Church

Sr. Carol Cook, BVM

Rev. C.J. Hawking, Executive Director  
Arise Chicago

Father Dominic Grassi, Pastor  
St. Gertrude Catholic Church

Rabbi Brant Rosen  
Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation

Father Charles Bolser, Pastor  
St. Viator Parish

Father Mike Knotek

Rev. Ann Marie Colman  
United Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ Clergy

Father Pat Tucker, Pastor  
Sacred Heart Church, Palos Hills

Rev. Lowell D. Allen  
United Methodist Northern Illinois Conference, Retired

Father Larry McNally, Pastor  
Ascension Catholic Church

Rabbi Bruce Elder  
Congregation Hakafa

Sr. Gwen Farry, BVM

Father Robert Oldershaw, pastor emeritus  
St. Nicholas Catholic Church

cc: Catholic Health Association  
Illinois Attorney General  
Resurrection Health Care Board of Directors  
Provena Health Board of Directors