

## To the Residents of Western Pennsylvania,

We are witnessing a historic debate in Washington on the reform of our nation's healthcare delivery and financing systems. As the issues unfold, we must be mindful of actions made in our own community that affect access to quality care for our region's most vulnerable citizens.

The recent decision to close the community hospital in Braddock has caused ripples of fear and anger across Allegheny County. The decision was reportedly based on several years of financial losses at that hospital – \$5.7 million in 2008. Real lives and the future of a community hang in the balance.

I wish that the West Penn Allegheny Health System, which I am privileged to lead, had the financial resources to run the Braddock hospital, but we do not. We do, however, provide excellent quality care at the Forbes Regional Hospital in nearby Monroeville and today we are proposing a solution that we believe will keep Braddock open and, perhaps, secure the future of the nearby hospital in McKeesport.

The proposal is simple and requires both WPAHS and UPMC to work together in this particular instance. This is not easy for either side, but it is the right thing to do for the health of our patients. We are both non-profit charities and need to act in the best interests of the communities that we serve.

UPMC has stated on several occasions that the primary reason they are building a new hospital in Monroeville, at the cost of at least \$250 million, is that UPMC Health Plan subscribers are burdened by the need to travel into Oakland or other distant areas for inpatient care. WPAHS has privately offered more than once to contract with the UPMC Health Plan to provide these

patients access to the quality physicians, clinical programs, and facilities that are available in their community at Forbes Regional Hospital. To date, our offer has not been accepted.

Our offer to the patients enrolled in the UPMC Health Plan still stands. We believe that by working together, UPMC will be freed from the need to invest at least \$250 million in a small hospital that will duplicate high-quality services that have been available in Monroeville for 40 years.

And, the bonus is that the savings can be directed to keeping the hospitals in Braddock and McKeesport open. UPMC has reported to federal authorities losses of more than \$14 million for both hospitals in 2008. At this rate, the funds currently allocated for Monroeville can keep these hospitals open for at least 15 years.

The people of Western Pennsylvania have shown the world many times our collective ability to overcome the odds, bootstrap ourselves and rebuild our community. The time is right for the two major health systems to do the right thing for our patients and our hometown.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Olivia, M.D.  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
West Penn Allegheny Health System



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HEALTH SYSTEM**

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