

*From the desk of **Jim Ramsey***

Hospital CEOs address CJ's Sunday editorial

December 21, 2011

Dear Friends of UofL,

On Sunday, Dec. 18, the Courier-Journal ran an editorial against the merger of UofL Hospital with Jewish Hospital & St. Mary's HealthCare and the Saint Joseph Health System. Below is a copy of the response to the Courier-Journal from the hospital CEOs. Visit <http://unitingforkentucky.org/> for more information about the merger.

Letter to the editor

Not everyone will be happy with certain aspects of the proposed merger of Jewish Hospital & St. Mary's HealthCare, Saint Joseph Hospital System and University Hospital.

But **everyone** will lose if the merger fails.

It is disappointing that The Courier-Journal continues to push inaccurate and inconsistent information regarding the proposed hospital merger. While the editorial board certainly has a right, and an obligation, to print positions on community issues, the recent editorial calling on the governor to reject approval of the merger is full of inaccuracies.

There's an old adage that one shouldn't pick a fight with another who buys ink by the barrel. Well, we aren't picking a fight with the C-J, its reporters or even its constitutional right to opine in opposition to the merger. But we will defend our institutions. And we trust the people of Kentucky and the Governor of Kentucky are smart enough to make up their own minds about the merger without ongoing inaccuracies from the recent editorial.

Inaccuracy: The merger partners acted in "secretive, contorted fashion."

Fact: Over the last nine months leaders of the sponsor and merging partner organizations have met with dozens of community groups, such as GLI, Downtown Rotary and Louisville Urban League, and granted radio, television and newspaper interviews – scores of those with The Courier-Journal. In addition, all the leaders appeared before the Interim Joint Committee on Health and Welfare, participated in a public forum hosted by the Metro Louisville Board of Health, discussed the issues with opponents at the Louisville Forum and met with the C-J editorial board – all of which were recorded, televised and available online. Most importantly, we have made the relevant documents related to this transaction available for public viewing through www.unitingforkentucky.org.

Inaccuracy: “The public hospital will be bartered away....to a religious group.”

Fact: While we will continue to celebrate the unique heritages of our organizations, University Hospital and Jewish Hospital & St. Mary’s HealthCare will not become Catholic hospitals. As reflected in the merging documents at www.unitingforkentucky.org and in numerous statements over the months, only the legacy Catholic institutions will be Catholic after the merger. As The Courier-Journal accurately reflected in news coverage, the truth is that the merging partners have agreed contractually not to perform tubal ligations, sterilizations, elective abortions and euthanasia at the facilities that are not Catholic. Elective abortions and euthanasia are not permitted under Kentucky law and, therefore, are not currently performed at these hospitals or any others throughout the state.

Inaccuracy: “UofL has worked out a deal to whisk women who have given birth at University across town to Baptist East Hospital for a tubal ligation.”

Fact: State law requires a minimum 24-hour notice before a physician can perform a tubal ligation. University of Louisville Physicians are not part of the merger and will make arrangements for their patients to deliver their babies at the hospital that best meets that patient’s needs, whether that hospital is University, Baptist or elsewhere. We strongly agree that decisions about treatment should remain between a patient and her

doctor.

Our organizations have a common mission and are committed to delivering better care together. This recent editorial is an affront to our shared dedication and decades-long histories of serving our communities. You know us – we care for your loved ones, your friends, your neighbors, your coworkers. We must be able to continue to do so, but without the needed capital infusion this merger will bring, the future is questionable.

We will not win over our critics, but that is not our goal. Our goal is to continue caring for those who cannot afford health care, relieve suffering, conquer disease and improve the health and well-being of people across the Commonwealth.

If you are confused by what has been said and reported about the proposed merger, please take the time to review the [merger documents](#) yourself. You will find that what's been agreed to balances the interests of three organizations that currently compete but want nothing more than to work together to continue to provide excellent medical care to all those in need.

To believe there is a better alternative is to trust in an illusion. The merger is the best option and the best opportunity.

Jim Taylor

President and CEO

University of Louisville Hospital

David Laird

President and CEO

Jewish Hospital & St. Mary's HealthCare

Bruce Klockars

Interim CEO

Saint Joseph Health System

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A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "James A. McNamee", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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