
An Open Letter to Our Community from the Good Samaritan Hospital Board of Directors

December 22, 2009

Dear Residents of Central Nebraska,

As members of the Board of Directors for Good Samaritan Hospital, we are called to be faithful to the hospital's mission and the legacy of care the Sisters of Saint Francis began 85 years ago. We take our responsibility seriously and weigh the impact of decisions with the needs of the greater good. We are long-time residents of the region and, as such, work for the best interests of the community at large. Good Samaritan Hospital is the community's hospital.

A for-profit hospital is planning to come to Kearney, and we are increasingly concerned that this facility poses a serious risk to healthcare services now available in our region. Not only that, but an investor-owned hospital would divide the medical community and its members' priorities and weaken patients' access to a full scope of high-level, acute medical care.

At the center of this concern is how an investor-owned hospital would threaten our region's Level II trauma center. More than 350,000 people in central Nebraska and northern Kansas cannot afford to lose access to vital trauma care services. Last year alone, Good Samaritan Hospital received more than 750 trauma patients referred from 51 hospitals in Nebraska, Kansas, and South Dakota.

Equally important is how a for-profit facility would affect Good Samaritan's ability to fulfill its mission, specifically our ability to ensure access to healthcare for all people regardless of their ability to pay. Last year, we provided financial assistance to 2,047 patients who could not otherwise afford the healthcare services they needed. If funding for that care is jeopardized, other vital services provided by Good Samaritan may need to be discontinued in order to continue to offer assistance to those who cannot pay.

Good Samaritan Hospital has long committed itself to providing progressively specialized care, offering services that one would expect to find only in much larger cities. We are prepared for the changes coming in healthcare and invite the physicians to join us in serving the community's healthcare needs. A for-profit hospital is not the direction healthcare reform is headed and would be a detriment to medical services for rural Nebraskans and Kansans.

As the Good Samaritan Hospital Board of Directors, we seek to continue Kearney's proud tradition of collaboration. The hospital has provided a series of innovative programs to address the physicians' concerns, and we are pleased that many physicians are working with us to implement them. Kearney's medical community has grown and thrived because we worked together; let's continue that successful partnership. We invite the physician investors to meet with us and collaborate for the care of our patients.

This Board of Directors will work vigorously on behalf of the community to preserve Good Samaritan Hospital's mission of serving residents of the region. Even as we do our utmost to maintain Kearney's status as the region's preferred referral center while protecting Level II trauma services, rest assured Good Samaritan Hospital's staff, leaders, and board continue to focus on what's most important: caring for our patients.

Sincerely,

The Good Samaritan Hospital Board of Directors

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INITIATIVES

Good Samaritan Hospital

Kearney, Nebraska

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