

THE EQUAL TIMES

Women's rights. Nothing less.



RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR HOSPITAL MERGERS: WHAT DO THEY MEAN FOR YOUR HEALTH CARE?

The pace of hospital mergers nationally has been increasing; the number in 2012 was double that in 2009. As a result of these mergers, the total number of acute-care hospitals in the country dropped (by 6% from 2001-2011) for all but one type of non-profit hospital: **the number of Catholic-run acute-care hospitals increased by 16%.**



And **Washington State is the hotspot for this hospital merger activity**; the past three years have seen at least 10 completed or proposed Catholic-secular affiliations, more than anywhere else in the country. If these transactions go through, almost half of the acute-care hospital beds in Washington State will be under Catholic influence. **Catholic providers will be the only source of health care for entire regions**, such as the northwest corner, the San Juan Islands, and much of the Olympic peninsula.

But why, specifically, should patients be concerned if their health care provider is a Catholic organization? Consider this: **All Catholic hospitals are bound by the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.** These Directives explicitly prohibit certain reproductive health services, including

- Any form of “artificial contraception,” which includes condoms, hormonal contraceptives, and sterilization;
- Emergency contraception;
- “Direct abortion” when there is a fetal heartbeat, including pregnancy emergencies – for example, when there is an

ectopic pregnancy, anencephaly, or premature rupture of membranes;

In addition, the Directives prohibit infertility treatment, and can result in LGBT patients being denied the full range of medical care. Further, Catholic health care systems often prohibit physicians from participating in the Death With Dignity Act, do not honor terminally ill patients’ directives, and deny information and referrals for patients for aid in dying.

As a result of the Directives, Catholic hospitals restrict access to a full range of reproductive and end of life health care, counseling, and referrals. The fact that access to care depends on interpretation of the Directives by the individual hospital’s ethics committee – or the bishop – breeds confusion for providers and patients alike. Such confusion results in delays of health care at best, and – at worst – outright refusals. And, as is often the case with the Death With Dignity Act, if patients never even find out about all their legal options, they are consequently unable to exercise them.

What’s more, although secular hospitals often claim they will continue to operate as independent entities, more often these takeovers – sold to the public as “affiliations,” “mergers,” “partnerships” – require the secular entity to agree to adhere to the Directives. Here are some lesser-known additional impacts as a result of these takeovers:

- Affiliated entities, including clinics, hospices, pharmacies, laboratories, and research institutions, are required to abide by the Directives;
- Physicians, nurses, and other providers must usually sign new employment contracts at the time of the transaction that include express agreements to abide by the Catholic Ethical and Religious Directives;

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- Physicians who provide care, such as aid-in-dying, outside hospital premises are not covered by the hospital's insurance when they do so;
- Lease agreements in Catholic-owned office buildings bind private practice physicians to the Directives, even when they are providing care in their own private office settings;
- Employees are deprived of access to, and insurance coverage of, services prohibited by the Directives.

Legal Voice has been monitoring these Catholic takeovers for over a decade. And now, along with a broad coalition of organizations, **Legal Voice has been actively advocating for**

policy solutions to protect patients' rights and to ensure that Washington patients receive access to a full range of health care, no matter where they live. We believe that your health care should be an informed decision made by you and your medical provider based on your needs – not a decision made for you by the local bishop and by restrictive hospital policies.

To learn more about current actions and developments regarding hospital mergers, as well as what you can do, please visit our website, LegalVoice.org.

CHANGE IS IN THE AIR.

Legal Voice was fortunate to have June Krumpotick as a key staff member for 24 years. June designed and managed our Self Help Program and its two components: a legal information and referral (I&R) telephone line answering calls from women and men with legal problems and providing them with legal information and referrals to useful resources; and a Self Help Committee that identified legal issues facing women and then developed memoranda and court packets to provide women with legal information they could use to navigate the legal system. June retired in 2013, and Legal Voice undertook an assessment of the Program – the first in its history – to determine its effectiveness as a tool to educate women about their legal rights, who else in our community provides similar or comparable services, and how other organizations around the country with information lines function.

We learned a lot. We learned once again how valuable June was to the entire community. We learned that the phone line was no longer one of the ways which Legal Voice can identify emerging legal issues facing women. And we learned we would need to retool the phone line substantially to make it more effective. It would not be fair to expect someone to step in the current program created uniquely by June and be successful at it.

Thanks to the hardworking committee that conducted the assessment (and our partners in Washington and allies across the country who answered our questions), we were able to identify the strengths and challenges of the Self Help Program. At the same time, Legal Voice, like many organizations, is still recovering from the Great Recession. After a lengthy, deliberative process, the Board of Directors concluded that the legal landscape in Washington is very different from 1989. Vastly more resources have been created, and are widely available and accessible. And the I&R line was no longer effectively serving all the functions it had for so long: we were able to answer far fewer calls, and the I&R line is no longer a pipeline helping Legal Voice identify emerging issues and cases.

The Board decided that continuing the I&R line was unsustainable for Legal Voice. So the line has been retired. We are asking the Self Help Committee to reconvene and help us determine which of our materials is most critical and most related to Legal Voice's core mission of advancing women's legal rights. We are still firmly committed to legal rights education, and as Legal Voice grows financially stronger, we will explore ways we can expand our legal education work.

Legal Voice could not carry out its work without the support of all our volunteers, and the Self Help Program has brought hundreds of law students, paralegals, and lawyers to our community over the years. THANK YOU for being part of this program.

JOIN US!

Thursday, December 5th **Legal Voice's Annual Legislative Lunch & Learn** 12-1:30 p.m. at the Legal Voice Offices.
Thursday, March 27th, 2014! **Legal Voice's Cocktails for a Cause**, 6-8 p.m. at the Renaissance Seattle Hotel.



PHOTOS: Suzanne Fiore Photography

YOU DID THIS!

Wow! What an amazing auction! Thank YOU for being part of such a fabulous party along with other generous supporters of our work. That night, we raised more funds than we ever have at our auction.

Because you believe in the work we do, came together with your friends, colleagues, and family members to support Legal Voice and women's rights, and encouraged businesses throughout the community to support us, we raised **\$209,000**.

This year we were offered a unique opportunity to double our "Raise the Paddle" amount with a matching gift from Michele's Fight for Human and Animal Rights, up to \$50,000. We sailed past our goal by raising \$3,500 from absent friends before the event, and more than \$55,000 that evening. All told, more than \$109,000 was raised just in donations!

A huge thank you to our friends, family, and colleagues who came out and dashed for cakes, bid on fantastic items, and made this event the most successful in our 25+ year history of doing auctions.

Thank you to all of our sponsors for their generous support: Foster Pepper, Garvey Schubert Barer, K&L Gates, Skellenger Bender, Stoel Rives, Summit Law Group, VanNess Feldman GordonDerr; and also our friends Holland America Line, MacDonald Hoague & Bayless, Mainstreet Legal Malpractice Insurance, Ogden Murphy Wallace, Perkins Coie, Pride Foundation, Schwabe Williamson & Wyatt, and Stokes Lawrence.

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT LEGAL VOICE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON!



Legal Voice has joined Amazon Smile: smile.amazon.com. When you shop through AmazonSmile, 0.5% of your sales will be donated to Legal Voice! Thank you for keeping us in mind this holiday season. There are specific rules to which purchases apply, but every little bit helps. Use this link when logging in to your Amazon account: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/91-1047900>

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

If you're not much of a shopper or an Amazon customer, a new nationwide phenomenon called "Giving Tuesday" might be right up your alley. The logic behind this fast-growing 'event' is that the day after Thanksgiving is Black Friday, folks head back to work and do online shopping on Monday (which is now called "Cyber Monday"), and, perhaps as an antidote to all that shopping, folks then reach out to their favorite organizations to show their support on "Giving Tuesday." You can participate in Giving Tuesday by donating directly through the Legal Voice website: www.LegalVoice.org/donate.

LEGAL VOICE

907 Pine Street
Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98101

T 206-682-9552

W LegalVoice.org

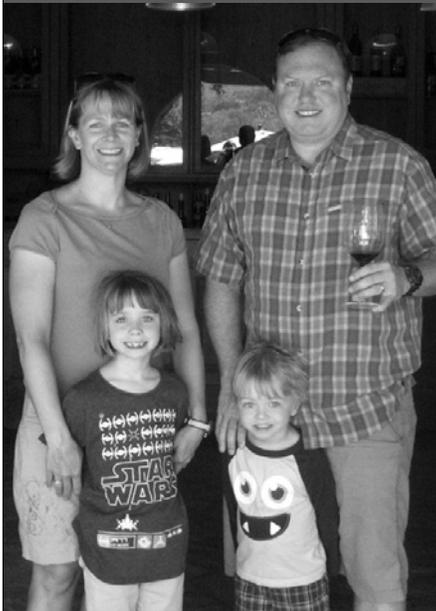
E info@LegalVoice.org

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ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 2607



BECOMING A LEGAL VOICE VISIONARY

BY PRESIDENT ELECT MOLLY TERWILLIGER



I have been involved with Legal Voice in various capacities since I moved to Seattle in 1998. In the past 15 years, I've donated my time and money to Legal Voice because I believe that the work we do has the ability to improve the everyday lives of women, girls, and families. I believe that Legal Voice's work will ensure that my daughter has the same rights and opportunities as my son.

No one likes to think about designating a contingent beneficiary in their will, but I recently designated Legal Voice as my contingent beneficiary. It's obviously hard to think about the circumstances that would lead to Legal Voice actually receiving a benefit from our estate. But it is a great relief to think that any amount would be used to carry on the good work of Legal Voice for the benefit of all women, girls, and families.

Legal Voice Visionaries are supporters and friends who have included Legal Voice in their estate plans or wills. If you are interested in our Visionaries program and would like to know more about it, please contact B. Michelle Johnson, Director of Development at 206-682-9552x113 or by email at MJohnson@LegalVoice.org.

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