

As physician leaders serving at the time of the Optima demerger, we can attest to the negative impact it had on our community, the medical staff and the morale of Catholic Medical Center. Many of us have practiced medicine in the greater Manchester area since the 1980's or 90's. We've either held or currently hold medical staff leadership positions. We've lived through the past and we look forward to the future. We stand solidly behind the leadership and vision of CMC. We endorse the proposed affiliation between CMC Healthcare System (CMCHS) and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health (DHH) and believe it will secure Catholic Medical Center in the palm of 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare, without a loss of its Catholic identity or philosophy. This will provide for the long-term viability of Catholic Medical Center and Catholic healthcare for decades to come.

As medical staff physician leaders we understand the landscape of healthcare delivery is rapidly evolving. Multiple factors influencing change include federal government policy, the push for a comprehensive nationalized healthcare reform bill, the public awareness and demand for high quality, efficient, accessible care. There are exciting advances in technology and imaging that have been and will be developed. We continue to balance utilization of these advancements with the necessary care we can provide to a growing number of uninsured, an aging population and those with chronic diseases.

It is the responsibility of a hospital and healthcare system to address these issues and respond efficiently, prudently and proactively to ensure its viability and continue its commitment to the communities it serves to provide safe, high quality healthcare well into the future. Through this proposed affiliation, clinical and strategic planning initiatives and decisions will originate at the local level where there is direct experience and interaction with patients and the community. Increased sub-specialty care and access at CMC will provide for a greater patient benefit.

The leadership at Catholic Medical Center embraces this responsibility with an appreciation of the Catholic healthcare traditions. We as physician leaders can verify that the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERDs) are policy and practice at CMC. Our medical staff is educated and informed on the ERDs on initial appointment. There is a strong belief in delivering the highest quality of medical care at CMC based on the Ethical and Religious Directives set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

An important aspect of the proposed affiliation is the ability of CMCHS to lease the services of over 100 primary and sub-specialty care providers allowing for greater patient access to a comprehensive care platform. CMC and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Manchester seek to address the needs of a forward-thinking clinical structure – that of a cost efficient continuum of care that delivers quality healthcare services across the inpatient and outpatient setting.

To ensure the viability of a healthcare system is a great challenge. It's a challenge the Board of Directors, the leadership and the staff at all levels is taking on with care, thought and deliberation. The leadership team at CMC is positioning the hospital to succeed well into the future with the utmost certainty it will remain a Catholic hospital. Be assured, the goal of CMC is to improve and deliver safe, accessible, high quality healthcare to our community.

We stand united to do everything we can to strengthen Catholic Medical Center, by providing quality care that allows us to collectively fulfill our mission of helping those most in need. The proposed affiliation helps us accomplish this task.

Keith Stahl, MD, Medical Director, Primary Care Physician Practice Association  
Louis Fink, MD, FACC, Medical Director, New England Heart Institute  
Patrick Mahon, MD, FACC, Chairman, Department of Surgery  
Joseph Pepe, MD, Chief Medical Officer  
Raef Fahmy, DPM, FACFAS, Vice President, Medical Staff; Chairman, Credentials Committee