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July 2003

July 21, 2003

Donald S. Clark
Office of the Secretary
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20580

Dear Mr. Clark:

Recently the proceedings of the hearings back in April about "Health Care Competition Law and Policy" came to the attention of local media in Little Rock and I had an occasion to review what was available on the website. I noticed not only that my comments regarding St. Vincent's might have been ambiguous but that also Dr. Kane had sent you a letter trying to clarify his points further. I would like to do exactly the same.

Many of the challenges that face St. Vincent's current administration were fundamentally inherited from their predecessors. It is very clear because of the proximity of St. Vincent's (I can see them from my office window) and the great amount of information available in the town about each hospital's activities that Mr. Mansfield and his team have done an enormous amount in an effort to turn these problems around and to bring St. Vincent's back to a strong presence in our community. I certainly would not want to leave you or any of the readers of the hearings with the impression that I consider the present activities and trajectory of St. Vincent to be anything other than improving and headed in a very good direction. Thank you for the opportunity to clarify this point.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bates, M.D.
President and CEO

JB:jcm

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