

Greene County Medical Society

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Attachment 3

July 12, 2001

TO: All members of Greene County Medical Society
FROM: Executive Council of Greene County Medical Society
SUBJECT: Opportunities and choice for physicians and patients in our region

Dear Colleague:

Recently Drs. David Redfern, Darren Lehnert, Don Kratz, Elizabeth Campbell, Christopher Stein, Lisa Powell, Howard Follis and Thomas McClain have asserted legally and in the media their belief that some patients and physicians in our region are not benefiting from fair and full economic competition.

The mission statement of the Greene County Medical Society calls for advocacy for physicians, patients, and the public health. While not intruding into personal legal matters, the Executive Council of the Greene County Medical Society met on July 11, 2001, and *unanimously affirmed our commitment to the principles of fair economic competition and opportunity for our patients and physicians.*

We are dismayed by the extraordinary number of physicians who have felt compelled to retire early, move away from Springfield, or leave Missouri altogether in the last few years. We have counted more than 90 doctors who have left practice in Springfield during the last three years. This is a terrible disruption and loss for thousands of patients. The exodus is a horrible drain of talented and mature professionals from the fabric of our community. This number of physician departures is unprecedented.

It is imperative for patients, employers, and Doctors to have the freedom to participate in a wide array of economically competitive healthcare delivery plans. With two extremely dominant tax-favored hospital systems in Springfield, the public good of competition and choice must be defended and promoted vigorously. An able and willing physician should not be prohibited from taking care of patients or participating in the health insurance plans of these two dominant hospitals. Patients must be able to choose their Doctor and hospital freely. Doctors must not be driven away from the community. Employers should not be forced to write exclusive contracts which limit their employees' rights to use the Doctor and hospital of their preference.

The Greene County Medical Society has a proud tradition of advocacy for our patients, physicians, and the public health since our founding in 1874. We look forward to continuing this unique and essential work in the rapidly changing 21st century. Let us know of your ideas and talents as we work together to improve medical care in the Ozarks.

American Medical Association

Physicians dedicated to the health of America



Rosary A. Payne, JD
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September 12, 2001

David L. Redfern, M.D.
1900 South National
Suite 1960
Springfield, MO. 65804

Dear Dr. Redfern,

Your letter of August 6th, regarding recent developments in Springfield, Missouri whereby physicians are leaving their practices due to exclusive contracts or restrictive covenants with St. John's Health System was referred to me. You indicate that this situation has caused many patients to face a constantly changing panel of physicians in their network. You have asked the AMA to respond to these issues and validate the principles in support of patient choice. While the AMA does not advocate for either party in this situation, the AMA does advocate for quality health care, patient choice and access in regard to physicians and AMA has policy and ethical opinions that support those principles.

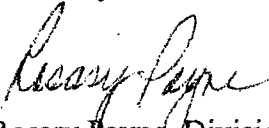
AMA policy supports freedom of choice of physicians by all individuals. Free choice of physicians is the right of every individual. One may select and change at will one's physician, or one may choose a medical plan such as that provided by a closed panel or group practice or health maintenance organization. The individuals freedom to select a preferred system of health care and free competition among physicians and alternative systems of care are prerequisites of ethical practice and optimal patient care. (Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, E.-9.06).

Freedom to select one's physician and health plan is essential and any barrier to free choice restricts access and compromises quality care. Any covenant that restricts or disrupts a physician's ability to practice medicine in a specific area or for a specific period of time deprive patients of care and undermines established patient-physician relationships. (Council of Ethical and Judicial Affairs, E-9.02)

Mr. David L. Redfern
September 12, 2001
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Any situation which eliminates the opportunity for patients to choose their physician, disrupts physician-patient relationships or forces a physician to leave the community in order to practice is counterproductive to quality care. We hope that the issues which have caused some Springfield physicians to leave the area can be quickly resolved in the spirit of mutual concern for patient care.

Sincerely,



Rosary Payne, Division Counsel

cc: Lois Hoyes, Greene County Medical Society
Cork Swarens, Missouri State Medical Society

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Springfield this training con- and for vo-tech the near future. ng before we're shtement rate." of the Missouri tentials is going to "onomical." bring more rs into the ducators at the convention ask will address days of certifi- sm. 3 annual con- n, held in field since 1988. Monday with ation and is at the Univer- are begin today. its will discuss ain more voca- and for skilled udents are tak- ties.



David Reidem
Woman's Clinic
physician

St. John's official says the turnover rate is still below national averages.

By Sandy Z. Poneleit
News Leader

A structure that forces physicians and patients to choose between one of Springfield's two dominant hospital systems is driving doctors away and harming patients, according to a letter from the Greene County Medical Society. One physician has identified more than 120 St. John's Regional Health Center doctors who have left the hospital's system since 1998, either through retirement, relocation or resignation.

Prompted by a federal lawsuit filed by eight Springfield physicians in May against St. John's Health System, Greene County Medical Society officials in a July 12 letter expressed dismay at the number of doctors departing the region, calling it "a terrible disruption and loss for thousands of patients."

"The problem is the idea that patients are moved around like checkerboard pieces, and many times, the doctor-patient relationship is extremely important to that person," said Dr. David Muegge, president-elect of the medical society. "When you lose 90-plus highly trained professionals from the community, that's a loss to the community and terrible for the patient."

In the letter to the 400 members, the executive council of the medical society decided the exodus of more than 90 doctors from their practices in Springfield during the past few years, stating the number

Talent drain hurting community, letter says

Doctors' departures Worry medical society



Mike Peters
Spokesman for
St. John's



Dr. Lisa Powell talks to patient Tricia Holmes on Monday at the Woman's Clinic. A recent letter from the Greene County Medical Society, in reaction to a May lawsuit against St. John's Health System, says patients must be able to choose their doctor and hospital freely.

Steve J.P. Liang / News Leader

is "unprecedented."

The letter expressed no desire to intrude into matters of litigation, but the society said the talent drain, caused by the same issues raised in the lawsuit, is damaging "the fabric of our community."

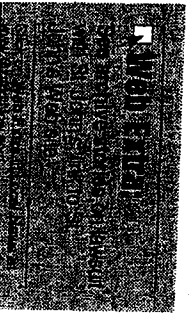
Mike Peters, spokesman for St. John's Health System

can turnover within that system in 2001 is about 7 percent. For each of the previous two years, the turnover rate was roughly 16 percent. For multigrup specialty clinics, he said, "that's below national averages."

Laurie Cunningham, spokes-

On average, there has been about a 2 percent turnover rate for its physicians for each of the last three years.

Peters said he understands there are more than 670 physicians in Greene County, and the loss of 90 over three years is not an



News Leader
July 24, 2001

St. John's/Hospital pulls charity sponsorship

Continued from 1A

exceptionally high rate — doctors retire, quit practice or move out of the area.

Patients must be able to choose their doctor and hospital freely, the society's letter stated. "It is imperative for patients, employers and doctors to have the freedom to participate in a wide array of economically competitive health care delivery plans. ... Employers should not be forced to write exclusive contracts which limit their employees' rights to use the doctor and hospital of their preference."

Don Magness, of Bois D'Arc, said he is concerned about what these issues mean to him as a patient.

"We've been using Dr. (Norman) Knowlton for 20 years," Magness said. "Because of this situation between doctors and St. John's ... I don't understand this fully, I just know he's moving from St. John's."

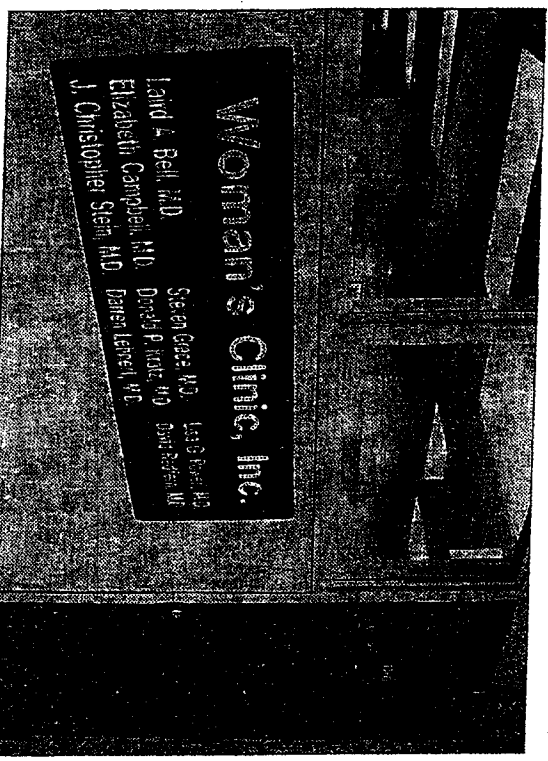
The insurance plan offered at Magness' employer makes it cost-prohibitive to go outside the St. John's system for a doctor.

"You can't choose your own doctors," Magness said. "This situation ... I just don't think it's right."

Dr. Bill Reynolds, an independent plastic surgeon and former medical director for St. John's burn unit, said, "We're losing a lot of our medical, surgical and radiographics talent — they're going someplace else. We have to ask ourselves, 'Why is that?'"

The issue is that patients need a choice of doctors, Reynolds said.

Medical society officer Muegge said the local health care delivery system is jeopardized on three fronts. "Patients are being disrupted from vital doctor-patient relationships, physicians are being boxed in as far as freedom of choice and ability to make decisions on behalf of their patients, and employers in many cases are economically forced to write exclusive insurance plans that economically



Steve J.P. Lang/News-Leader

Eight doctors, including six from the Woman's Clinic, are suing St. John's Health System. St. John's spokesman Mike Peters expressed disappointment that the Greene County Medical Society weighed in on the matter.

strongly favor one hospital system over the other," Muegge said.

Economic competition, choice and respect for the physician-patient relationship are what's needed, Muegge added.

Eight doctors, including six from the Woman's Clinic, filed a federal lawsuit against St. John's in late May saying the system violated state and federal antitrust laws. The physician group stated they are constrained from competing for patients in Springfield because of the health system's anti-competitive practices. Woman's Clinic physician Dr. David Redfern said depositions are now being scheduled in the suit.

"The bottom line relative to our suit is, at the end of the day, if my group wins the suit, we're going to admit our patients at St. John's, be able to have a practice in this community and have access to patients," Redfern said. "If we lose the suit, then patients will be forced to go to

other physicians and my group will no longer be able to practice."

Peters said the suit has nothing to do with St. John's quality of care. "We think we are on legally sound grounds on our defense of the lawsuit brought by the Woman's Clinic, and I guess we're disappointed that the executive council of the Greene County Medical Society decided to get involved with it," he said.

Though patients have wondered about the questions raised in the society's letter, Peters said physician quality in the region remains second to none. "While these issues are being discussed publicly, there is some concern among patients about their personal health care," he said.

"I think we want to assure them that the quality is the same, and we will treat them in the manner to which they are accustomed."

Lois Hays, managing director of the medical society, said she received a call from Peters subsequent to release

of the executive council's letter. She said Peters told her that St. John's was rescinding its support as sponsor of the society's Aug. 5 golf tournament in the amount of \$1,000. The event is in its 10th year, and St. John's has always been a sponsor, she said. All sponsor funds are divided equally among local children's charities.

"I think it's unfortunate that (St. John's officials) interpret these events (surrounding the letter) in this way, that they would withdraw money in support of children's charities," said Hays, who is hoping to replace the \$1,000 pledge.

When asked about the reason for the withdrawal, Peters said, "How can we contribute to an organization which is publicly supporting a group that's brought a lawsuit against us?"

In a similar vein to the Greene County Medical Society's letter, the American Medical Association recently released a brochure highlighting problems of limited patient choices and disruptions in care because of changed health plans. The text outlines the AMA proposal for options to choose a health-care plan, and advantages such as lower costs, expanded coverage and increased fairness.

Redfern, in a July 6 letter from his clinic doctors seeking a statement from the local medical society, said the request was not to "take sides" in the antitrust lawsuit, but to address issues detrimental to the medical community. Redfern points to doctor turnover that is "the highest in recent history."

His unofficial list tracking departures from St. John's has more than 120 physician names from 1998 through July 12, and an additional 25 non-St. John's doctors. "The anticompetitive nature of St. John's business practices makes it so costly for physicians to leave St. John's Health System and stay in our community that they find it easier to leave town," Redfern said.

SMS literature professor Kalk praises the Pulitzer winner's

From Our Staff and Wire Services

JACKSON, Miss. — When Eudora Welty died Monday, she left behind a treasury of depictions of small-town Mississippi and she left her mark on American literature.

Welty, author of "The Ponder Heart," "Losing Battles" and "The Optimist's Daughter," for which she won the Pulitzer Prize in 1973, said fiction provided her with the most productive tool for analyzing human personality.

"I'm not any kind of prophet, but I think it's in our nature to talk, to tell stories, appreciate stories," she said in a 1991 interview. "I think you write about whatever's current ... They won't be the same kind of stories, but they'll be about human beings."

She was adored by critics, fellow writers and even some musicians. Country star Nancy Griffith cited her as an influence, and an incident from Welty's memoir, "One Writer's Beginnings," inspired Mary Chapin Carpenter to write the song and children's book "Halley Came to Jackson."

"She was extraordinary," said the author and critic Elizabeth Hardwick. "She had her own voice and her own tone and her own subject matter. There was no one quite like her in American literature."

Katherine Lederer, who has taught English at Southwest Missouri State University for 41 years, said she heard about Welty's death while driving to work Monday afternoon.

"It really made me sad," she said. "It's the end of something."

Lederer, who said she has read about everything Welty has written and taught several courses about the author, said Welty was the last of "that great generation of Southern writers," which includes names such as William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy.

"There are younger ones who are good writers," she said. "She's just about the last of the classics."

Citing one of Welty's classic short stories, "Why I Live at the P.O.," Lederer said

erer said thing I alw literature, Welty's Wedding" lles" in 19 "The Ro made into In 1998 lished a tw works, the had been t Unlike Faulkner, present w Her ch of Clytie, drowns h Daw, a fee love with Teacake A wedding, who suffe "I have and in acc all my ch ing of an into the 1 human b Welty wro She on observer, everythin than any eral, you eye sees, Welty April 13, all her lif Universt ing from and doin Columbia Her fin and cont beloved Path," "I Live at th Robber 1 year later