

I know the commissioners' hearts and efforts have been and are in the right place. The new hospital is a fabulous facility, badly needed and we are lucky to have it.

However, having the Catholic church, with its shameful history, having any say, whatsoever, in my health care, that of my loved ones, or anyone else, is unacceptable. The church's ideas come straight from the dark ages.

There was a time, a long time, when the church was all powerful, more powerful than government. They could dictate behavior and remind their subjects that, if not obeyed, they would be punished by their punishing god. The priests represented themselves as in direct contact with god, claiming that their wishes were god's wishes. They taught their subjects to be afraid of god, god fearing, as so many Catholics describe themselves. So, people feared god and the church itself.

Those days are long, long, gone. As Franklin Roosevelt so eloquently put it, "The only thing to fear is fear itself." Archaic beliefs have no place in twenty-first century health care. The Catholic church and its followers are free to believe what ever they want, but they should not be free to use those beliefs to form policy and to pick and choose what health care should be granted and what would be denied. The hospital's services must be based on science, not religion.

I am hearing growing concern in our community about the church's involvement in our hospital. I believe the ACLU is correct and that there are constitutional as well as social issues that need to be addressed and corrected. The contract must be redone to eliminate the church's ability to dictate coverage or denial.

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