

University of Louisville Looking for New Hospital Partner, or an Old Flame?

Posted on **February 17, 2012** by **P Hasselbacher**

No one who has corresponded with me believes that the University has given up its quest to be acquired by Catholic Health Initiatives. The Chairman of the Hospital's Board of Trustees pointedly refused to answer a direct question on the matter. One correspondent at Jewish Hospital believes the institution is treading water until the University can jump in the pool. I have [already commented](#) on what I believe is the University's strategy to present the governor with an offer he cannot refuse. Indeed, I am hearing secondhand that President Ramsey is telling supporters he will push this thing through. It certainly seems as though that is true. (If you have first-hand knowledge, I would love to hear from you.)

Today, reporters Chris Kenning and Patrick Howington tell us about yesterday's closed session of the Trustees of the University of Louisville giving its medical center permission to issue a request for proposals to seek a new partner. (I thought closed sessions weren't allowed for this sort of thing? So much for transparency.) Recall that failure to follow state procurement rules was one of many criticisms of the Attorney General's Office supporting the rejection of the first merger effort. The University appears to be doing some backfill work. I have not yet seen this RFP, but University officials are quoted as saying they are seeking a "health care entity with a statewide network and capital resources to help maintain the hospital teaching and indigent care missions." It seems to me this will be very short list. I will not be surprised that the RFP is written so narrowly that there is only one entity on earth that will fit the bill. (That is what some unethical employers do when they want to hire a particular person but yet be seen as following the procedures of affirmative action employment.) No doubt I will be proven wrong and will apologize for expressing an erroneous opinion. In fact, it just occurred to me that I am dead wrong. The University of Kentucky with its statewide presence and deep well of state support could easily be an eligible entity. The more I think of it, the better the idea seems! Brilliant!! (Of course there is also the Baptist system.)

KentuckyOne Health told its physicians today that it has been aware (was anyone else?) of the process and believes that a "close working relationship with the University of Louisville School of Medicine and University Medical Center is important to our vision as an organization." In fact they seem downright eager to respond to an RFP.

Shame on the University of Louisville for dragging its community through this monkey business all over again. Arrogance is a descriptor that comes to mind. Of course, if you know you will ultimately get your way, how you appear is of less consequence. There are many in our community who want to help the University and to protect our public hospital. The University is making it difficult for us to do so.

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