

Coalition opposes Exempla deal

Denver Business Journal - by [Bob Mook](#)

Another group has written a letter to Colorado Attorney General John Suthers, opposing a deal that would give the **Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health Systems** sole sponsorship of **Exempla Health Care**.

In a letter dated Dec. 3, a coalition of community advocates, health care providers, nonprofit attorneys and concerned citizens wrote to Suthers and expressed "serious concerns" about how the agreement would affect operations at Exempla's Lutheran Medical Center in Wheat Ridge and Good Samaritan Medical Center in Lafayette.

The letter, signed by ACLU of Colorado, the Colorado Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choices, The MergerWatch Project and the National Women's Law Center, among others, expressed concerns about the deal. They cited reservations about Catholic medical guidelines that prohibit sterilizations and contraceptive counseling, abortions, certain fertility treatments and end-of-life procedures, such as removing feeding tubes.

Catholic medical guidelines already are in effect at Exempla's Saint Joseph's Hospital in Denver. If the sponsorship change is

finalized, those guidelines would be followed at Lutheran and Good Samaritan.

The letter called the foundation's studies showing there are adequate services to provide women's health services "patently false."

"Even if [the foundation] could show that there are adequate services in the area, this would still not mitigate [the foundation's] obligation to those who have supported these hospitals and the people who rely on them to provide comprehensive, high-quality, non-sectarian health care," the letter said.

They also object to the financial terms of the deal, which they say would divert money away from the hospitals in order to buy out Exempla's current co-sponsors, the Community First Foundation.

Under the arrangement, the Sisters agreed to invest at least \$300 million in the Exempla hospitals and will make a \$311 million payment to acquire the foundation's stake in the hospitals.

Exempla's board of directors and a group of physicians also wrote to Suthers expressing identical concerns about the deal.

A spokesman for Suthers said the attorney general may issue an opinion on the matter within 10 days.