



Boston City Council
Stephen J. Murphy
City Councillor At-Large

September 25, 2007

Dr. Peter Slavin
CEO
Massachusetts General Hospital
55 Fruit Street
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Dr. Slavin:

I am writing to invite and encourage your involvement in a dialogue with the Boston City Council and 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East on a proposal to ensure a free and fair secret ballot election code of conduct for caregivers at Boston's hospitals who are considering the question of unionization.

The City Council's interest in this issue stems from several realities: Boston's hospitals have a proud reputation in quality patient care and cutting edge research, which we seek to preserve and advance. Additionally, our city's hospitals collectively account for one out of six jobs in Boston, and as such, the hospital industry plays a major role in determining economic standards for the people of Boston. Many hospital workers have expressed an interest in unionizing to gain a voice so they are better able to deliver quality care, make their hospitals the best they can be, advocate for their patients' interests, engage civically in healthcare policy, and lift the standard of living for themselves, their children and their co-workers.

In cities throughout the United States, it has been seen that campaigns by management of healthcare institutions against unionization can cause negative tension in the workplace and use precious hospital resources while detracting from the mission of the healthcare institution. This raises a number of concerns stemming from the reality that Boston's hospitals receive taxpayer funding as well as tax exemptions in exchange for playing a responsible civic role with the expectation that patient care is the first fiscal priority.

There is a better way: Many healthcare employers and unions throughout the U.S. have adopted codes of conduct creating a more positive atmosphere and process for caregivers to elect whether to join together as a union.

New City Hall • One City Hall Square • Boston • Massachusetts • 02201 • 617-635-4376

Fax 617-635-3734

Tomorrow, Wednesday September 26, 2007, I will be introducing a resolution calling upon Boston's hospitals to adopt just such a code of conduct, and I have included a copy of the draft language. In the coming weeks, we will be scheduling a formal hearing on the resolution before the City Council's Labor and Workforce Committee, and my office will provide you with the date and time, as soon as it is scheduled.

I also have enclosed two particularly persuasive recent essays, including one authored by a prominent hospital chief executive, regarding the reasonable proposition that caregivers themselves should be *free* to make up their own minds on the question of joining together as a union, under *fair* voting conditions.

I am writing to invite you to attend the upcoming Council hearing to hear the views of the proponents of the proposed code of conduct and to express your own. Moreover, I am writing to encourage you to consider making a commitment that you can announce at the hearing of your institution's commitment to a set of Free and Fair election code of conduct principles similar to those that have been adopted by many health systems across the country.

In so doing, I invite you to embark on a positive process of working with caregivers collectively through the organizations they may choose to represent them, to make our hospitals the very best they can be for patients and caregiver employees alike, as the medical institutions of Boston continue to be a source of pride for our city.

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Murphy
Councilor-at-Large

Enclosures: City Council Resolution
Boston Globe Op-Ed by Thomas Kochan, MIT Sloan School of Business
Essay by Richard Pettingill, CEO Allina Health System

CC: Mayor Thomas M. Menino
Council President Maureen E. Feeney
Councilor Flaherty, Chair, Labor and Workforce Committee
All Members Boston City Council