

SO WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF MONTGOMERY GENERAL PARTNERS WITH HOLY CROSS?

As you know, MGH is thinking about partnering with either MedStar Health or Holy Cross Hospital. If you practice medicine at Montgomery General Hospital, you should be very concerned about how a partnership with Holy Cross Hospital will **change your ability to care for your patients**.

From research and clinical trials, to emergency care to oncology, **every department and physician could feel the effects of a Holy Cross partnership**. As a Catholic-affiliated hospital, Montgomery General could be run under the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*. You should know that at Catholic-affiliated hospitals:

- Doctors are prohibited from performing, prescribing or even advising patients on the use of **contraception or sterilization**. The *Directives* permit only “natural family planning,” and this is limited to married couples.
- Doctors are prohibited from performing or referring their patients for **clinic trials or research** where participation requires the use of a highly effective contraceptive.
- Emergency room doctors may be prohibited from giving Emergency Contraception to women who have been **sexually assaulted**.
- Because the *Directives* prohibit any use of **contraceptives**, doctors cannot counsel individuals with HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases to use condoms or other barrier methods.
- Women with **ectopic pregnancies** could not be treated with fallopian tube-sparing surgery or a non-surgical alternative, the drug methotrexate.
- The *Directives* prohibit most **infertility** treatments and some methods of testing for infertility. Patients undergoing fertility-threatening medical treatments, such as chemotherapy, could not be counseled on methods to preserve their ability to have biological children, such as sperm-banking.
- When a woman is having a **miscarriage**, some hospitals interpret the *Directives* to prohibit a uterine evacuation until there is no longer a fetal heartbeat, delaying lifesaving treatment and subjecting women to hemorrhaging and infection.

As advocates who have worked on this issue across the country, we've seen hospitals considering partnerships with Catholic facilities **make and break promises** to not interfere with doctors' ability to care for patients, or to not adhere so closely to the *Directives*. A change in the leadership within the Diocese, or with Holy Cross' parent company, the Trinity Health System, could result in a change in interpretation of the *Directives*. The *Directives*, available at www.usccb.org, can also be changed at **any time**, along with your ability to practice medicine.

A coalition of community members and advocates is prepared to protect your right to practice medicine. For more information, please contact Jill Morrison at the National Women's Law Center, jmorrison@nwlc.org; 202-588-7616, or Lois Uttley at MergerWatch, lois@mergerwatch.org; 212-870-2010, ext. 1.