



The Diocese of Knoxville

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NEWS RELEASE

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CATHOLIC DIOCESE WELCOMES BUYER OF MERCY HEALTH PARTNERS; SAYS NEW OWNERS AGREE NOT TO PERFORM ABORTIONS

Bishop Richard F. Stika of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Knoxville said today that *Health Management Associates*, the company that plans to purchase *Mercy Health Partners*, has agreed to uphold certain Catholic values in the hospitals.

Bishop Stika said HMA would not perform abortions or euthanasia at any of the East Tennessee hospitals it is acquiring from *Mercy Health Partners*. HMA announced this morning it has entered into a definitive agreement to purchase the assets of *Mercy Health Partners*.

“We at the Catholic Diocese of Knoxville look forward to welcoming *Health Management Associates* to our community,” said Bishop Stika. “We are grateful that the system which began with a single hospital founded 81 years ago by the Sisters of Mercy to fulfill their mission here in our city will continue to exist.”

Bishop Stika said he has been worried about the possible loss of jobs if the sale were not accomplished. “Throughout the process, I have been concerned for all of the doctors, nurses and employees of *Mercy Health Partners* and for the need for quality health care in Knoxville and the surrounding communities,” he said.

“Even though we regret the loss of a Catholic institution, we are glad that the Mercy hospitals will continue to exist as the important community resource that they have been for nearly a century,” Bishop Stika said. “We have confidence in the leadership of

Health Management Associates to continue the legacy of service to which *Mercy Health Partners* has been committed.

Bishop Stika said HMA's agreement not to perform abortions or euthanasia would allow the Sisters of Mercy to maintain a presence at the hospitals and for Catholic Masses to be offered on a periodic basis in the non-denominational chapel at the former St. Mary's Medical Center in Knoxville. "This will be a wonderful way for the whole person – mind, body and spirit – to continue to be served in the future," Bishop Stika said.

The Very Rev. David A. Boettner, vicar general and moderator of the curia for the Diocese, said the Church appreciates the cooperation received from *Catholic Health Partners* and *Health Management Associates*. "The negotiations were handled very professionally and we were able to reach an outcome on the sale that will benefit our community," Father Boettner said.