



**House Committee on Health and Human Services**

**Testimony in opposition to H.B. 3011  
Price Transparency  
March 21, 2006**

The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System dates to 1864 with the founding of Saint John Hospital in Leavenworth, Kansas. The health services corporation was formed in 1972. The Health System is headquartered in Lenexa, and operates three hospitals in Kansas – Saint John Hospital, St Francis Health Center in Topeka, and Providence Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas. We also have six other acute care hospitals in California, Colorado, and Montana, and a total of four safety net clinics that serve the uninsured. SCL Health System has approximately 2,000 staffed beds supported by 11,000 full-time equivalent employees.

We appreciate the opportunity to share with you our thoughts about HB 3011 and price transparency.

As you may know, price transparency is receiving a lot of attention nationally. Hearings were held just last week by the Health Subcommittee of the U.S. House Energy & Commerce Committee. Apparently there was no consensus on whether the availability of price information would do anything to control rising health care costs (individuals will get a better price when they are part of a group; pharmaceuticals are a large element of rising costs) or solve the growing problem of the uninsured.

Yet we are not ignoring the issue. SCL Health System has established an internal Transparency Task Force which has developed a work plan to determine where we are regarding transparency, where we need to be, and how to get there. Our state and national associations, including the Catholic Health Association and the American Hospital Association, are also helping their members determine how to best meet the needs of patients for information about pricing, as well as information about charity care policies, quality and outcomes.

As transparency issues are being tackled by hospitals and health systems, we believe a state mandate on how to get it done is not only unnecessary, but not the best approach. We are certain we can do a better job voluntarily, in a manner that allows some flexibility in how to get information to patients today and in the future. We know many in Congress agree. Even the White House is saying they hope we can do it voluntarily rather than have to push legislation in Congress. It is our intent to satisfy policymakers and patients alike.

We urge the committee to forego action on HB 3011.

*Respectfully submitted,*

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Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System