

Public Statement from Union Health in Response to the FTC's Report on the Proposed Merger with Regional Hospital

The Wabash Valley has faced significant health challenges in recent years, and traditional healthcare models have not sufficiently addressed these issues. Vigo County ranks poorly among Indiana's 92 counties in several key health performance indicators, including 68th in life expectancy, 60th in suicide rate, and 54th in adult obesity, according to data published by the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH). Despite the presence of hospital competition in our community, these rankings indicate that existing healthcare structures have not adequately benefited our residents. The proposed merger between Union Health and Regional Hospital represents a bold, innovative approach to addressing these persistent health disparities.

Union Health has worked diligently to provide comprehensive data and documentation to IDOH, illustrating the potential positive impacts of this merger. This is not merely a business transaction; it is a strategic effort to improve healthcare delivery in our community. By combining resources and expertise, Union Health and Regional Hospital aim to expand services, enhance the quality of care, and ultimately improve health outcomes while maintaining cost efficiency for consumers. Additionally, this merger is poised to create new job opportunities and drive economic growth in the Wabash Valley, recognizing that community health is closely linked to economic development.

The health challenges faced by our residents require a tailored approach, and the proposed merger is a critical step forward in addressing these needs. This merger represents a forward-thinking approach to healthcare that prioritizes patient outcomes and community well-being.

As IDOH continues its thorough review of the proposed agreement, it is imperative that all voices are heard, and that the current health metrics of our community is taken into account. The Certificate of Public Advantage (COPA) process provides a structured framework for evaluating the merger, allowing IDOH to review all submitted data to make the best decision for our community. This opportunity is essential because the health of our communities can and should be improved. Doing things as they are today is not meeting the critical needs of our residents.

Our region faces a significant prevalence of chronic health conditions, including lung disease, diabetes, and hypertension, resulting in a population that is in critical need of accessible, high-quality care close to home. Securing the COPA is essential for enhancing the quality of and access to healthcare throughout our communities.

The COPA puts measures in place that will hold Union Health accountable for investing more financial resources back into bettering healthcare metrics for citizens living within the region. We firmly believe that improved health rankings are achievable and warrant our full commitment.

Union Health and Regional Hospital are dedicated to extending the benefits of both existing and new programs to a broader patient population. Current initiatives include in-home OB services, chronic disease case management, and continued partnerships with the Vigo County School Corporation to address childhood obesity and eating disorders. We are committed to the wellbeing of our community, making affordable and quality care essential.

While some may argue that mergers have not worked in other communities, our focus remains on the unique needs of the Wabash Valley. Union Health has a responsibility to do all we can to better

the lives of the people we serve. This decision was not made lightly; extensive research and careful consideration went into evaluating the pros and cons of this merger. We are committed to being a positive example of how a COPA can be utilized to better a community, a region, and most importantly, people's lives.

The proposed merger between Union Health and Regional Hospital holds the promise of a healthier future for the Wabash Valley. It is grounded in data, collaboration, and a deep commitment to the well-being of our residents. As the review process continues, our team at Union Health looks forward to collaborating with IDOH to showcase the positive impacts this agreement can have in our community. We believe this merger is not just advantageous; it is vital for the long-term success of the Wabash Valley.