

When a doctor's referral weakens your community hospital ...

... it's time for a second opinion.

A doctor prescribes surgery. Surgery not in the community hospital ... but in the specialty hospital he owns.

Isn't this a conflict of interest?

These physician-owned hospitals — these “boutique” or “niche” providers — undermine our community hospitals by skimming away the best-compensated procedures performed on the best-insured patients, diverting revenue that underwrites essential public services like emergency departments, trauma units and neonatal services.

Every day, community hospitals care for people with complex health needs and little or no health insurance. Without revenue to offset this cost, how can hospitals continue to care for those in need?

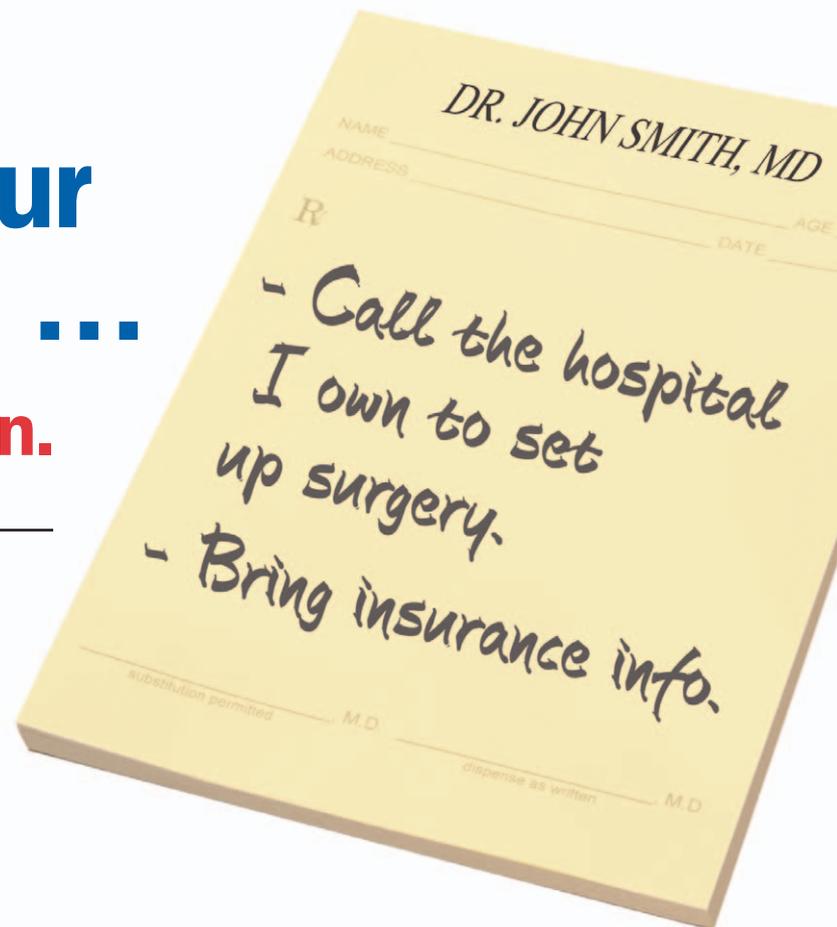
With a competitive disadvantage like this, our community hospitals don't stand a chance. It could hurt every one of us.

Congress can help. The Senate version of the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit and Modernization Act of 2003 will prohibit physicians from referring patients to a specialty facility in which they have an ownership interest.

And that will go a long way to help keep our community hospitals strong.

**Senators & Representatives:
Keep Our Hospitals Strong.**

**Retain the Breaux-Nickles-Lincoln
Language in the Final Medicare
Prescription Drug Bill.**



Hospitals across America feel the economic squeeze.

Lookout Memorial was a financially healthy 40-bed rural hospital in Spearfish, SD — population 9,600. But in 1998 a group of local physicians launched their own surgical center. With surgeries diverted to the physician-owned hospital, *Lookout* has seen a 50% decline in revenue, jeopardizing support for key patient services.

Via Christi Regional Medical Center is a full-service community hospital in Wichita, KS. But when *Kansas Heart Hospital* opened in 1999, heart bypass operations at *Via Christi* dropped from 1,400 to 650 in a short period of time, eliminating revenue that keeps the emergency room open, provides health care for the uninsured, and supports other vital health care services.

