

## Letters to the editor Dec. 28

### **Proceed with caution**

As president of Compassion and Choices of Santa Fe, I would like to state our concern at the prospective partnership of St. Vincent Regional Medical Center and Christus Health. We support advance directives and freedom to choose one's end-of-life care, so we strongly support going slowly in this process in order that all might have a chance to look closely at the overall ramifications of such a merger.

Some directives request the withdrawal of hydration and nutrition if in a vegetative state, or strong medication for pain if in the last stages of a terminal illness, even if it results in death.

Because we have only one community hospital, it's particularly frightening to think a hospital can override our treatment wishes based on a religious doctrine! There doesn't seem to be any satisfactory solution to this issue given existing Catholic directives.

Our objections ultimately come down to the loss of our freedom of choice both for a women's reproductive life and for the very personal right to determine one's end-of-life care.

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