



**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
JEFFERSON PARISH**

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MEDIA RELEASE

JEFFERSON PARISH INSPECTOR GENERAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WEST JEFFERSON HOSPITAL LEASE NEGOTIATION TEAM:
COMMITMENT TO MONITORING PROCESS**

On April 30, 2014, the Jefferson Parish Council is scheduled to consider a Resolution establishing the process to negotiate a lease agreement between Louisiana Children's Medical Center and West Jefferson Medical Center (Jefferson Parish Hospital District No. 1). The proposed resolution appoints four members to be the Primary Negotiation Team. They are a Merger and Acquisition Counsel; Anti-Trust Counsel, Representative of West Jefferson Medical Center Board of Directors, and "Office of Inspector General Representative (whose responsibility it is to oversee the process and identify any concerns to the Negotiation Team/Council on an ongoing basis for immediate correction.)

The JPOIG is committed to the citizens of Jefferson Parish to continue its independent monitoring of hospital lease negotiations. The JPOIG will continue to identify concerns to the Council and make recommendations. The JPOIG will not be a participant in negotiations, but welcomes the Council's confirmation and affirmation of its role and responsibility.

In August 2013, the JPOIG began monitoring the parish process and related issues surrounding the anticipated lease of West Jefferson Medical Center and East Jefferson Hospital. In November 2013, the JPOIG issued a memorandum under the subject line: Hospital Lease – Recommendations Regarding Formal Negotiations to the Parish Council. The JPOIG recommended that the Council consider:

- (1) selecting a new expert consultant and/or outside council with an established expertise in managing and overseeing the processes involved in hospital lease negotiations;

(2) establishing a clear structure and line of authority for future negotiations;
and

(3) permitting the negotiation team in such a matter which ensures integrity of process. The memorandum was publically released on November 22, 2013 following the required period for comment.

In February 2014, the Council approved a contract with Nemzoff & Company to analyze proposals to lease the hospital. The results were presented to the Council in open session at a special meeting on April 2, 2014.

The proposed resolution which recommends the inclusion of the JPOIG to the Primary Negotiation Team confirms and affirms the authority and powers already vested in the office by parish ordinance. The JPOIG is vested with the authority to audit, evaluate, and investigate parish contracts and financial arrangements to detect and prevent fraud, waste, abuse or inefficiency with independence and integrity.