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BUILD brings 58 people to CareFirst Headquarters in Canton

On Tuesday, November 3, BUILD clergy, members & organizers called on CareFirst CEO Chester Burrell in front of the CareFirst HQ building to meet to negotiate 1000 new jobs. Seven area hospitals, including Johns Hopkins, University of Maryland Medical Systems, and MedStar (Union Memorial, Good Samaritan, etc) have proposed creating 100 health care worker jobs, to be filed with people from the most distressed ZIP codes. This proposal is in direct response to decades long needs to address the link between poverty and health, and driven by the sense of urgency generated by the unrest following the death of Freddie Gray.



Opportunity to Unite the City



Instead of setting the example for corporations to unite the city, Mr. Burrell is blocking the proposal. There are seven votes on the HSCRC. It is likely right now that the votes are tied with three in favor, three opposed and one abstaining. As CareFirst is the region's leading health plan¹, Mr. Burrell is the primary power behind the opposition. Beginning Oct. 8th, BUILD has attempted to reach Mr. Burrell for a meeting through hand-delivered letter, certified mail, and via a request to his second in command, who indicated that Mr. Burrell

would not change his mind. Since Mr. Burrell would not meet with BUILD, BUILD attempted to meet with him. "To BUILD One Baltimore, the two cities must meet," explained Rev. Glenna Huber, BUILD Co Chair. "During this generational moment, Mr. Burrell refuses to even meet with BUILD leaders, further dividing our city. Baltimore cannot afford to return to business as usual. We need more jobs, better health."

Get to Know Me – Meet with BUILD – Make Two Cities One

In CareFirst's letter of opposition submitted to the HSCRC, Mr. Burrell explains, "While the central purpose of the program is to increase employment opportunities for *inner city residents with limited education and job experience*, we question how the hospitals will use such individuals to provide needed capabilities... Further if the jobs to be created are really needed and are not simply "make work" jobs to



fulfill a jobs program, then we question why the hospitals would not simply employ these individuals..."

Mr. Antoine Smith, an unemployed BUILD leader explained, "Mr. Burrell, I am from the inner city. I have three training certificates. I have always dreamed of working in health care. Mr. Burrell, you don't know me. Get to know me. Meet with BUILD. Make two cities one."

¹DC Metro Area Community Report, Mathematica Policy Research, December 2014, <http://jktgfoundation.org/data/DC%20CR%20Final.pdf>

Entry Refused

Instead of Mr. Burrell agreeing to meet, the building security blocked BUILD from entering to deliver our request to the receptionist, and refused to deliver the message himself. As many of us are CareFirst members, we were stunned that our entry was blocked into the headquarters of our insurer. Mr. Burrell will accept our money, but won't meet with us.



BUILD One Baltimore – **More jobs! Better health! Let's Meet!**

After being refused

entrance and waiting for a response from Mr. Burrell, BUILD clergy and members formed a single file line and walked around the building several times chanting BUILD One Baltimore – More Jobs, Better Health. Several leaders distributed fliers to passers-by. BUILD ended the action with prayer.



One Quarter to BUILD One Baltimore

The modest increase of $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1% would pay for the jobs, which translates into \$2.50 per every \$1,000 in billing. That means that a procedure that used to cost \$1,000.00 will now be billed to the insurance companies for \$1,002.50. But as Rev. Foster Connors stated in his interview in the Baltimore Business Journal, "This isn't just about jobs — it's about uniting Baltimore and about corporate leadership's responsibility to the community."

1000 community health care workers (and other jobs depending on the health needs of the communities) would assist their families with needed income, identify health issues before expensive acute care is needed, and help people discharged from the hospital to fully recover at home to lower risk of re-admission to the hospital. 1000 jobs would lift up thousands of people in our city, get people the access to health care that is so desperately needed, and improve health outcomes of these communities and the city.



Next Steps – We Need You to Act!

When the Baltimore Business Journal² asked Rev. Foster Connors why BUILD isn't attempting to meet with HSCRC instead of Burrell, he responded, "We know the HSCRC has the ultimate say, but we're not naive to CareFirst's power and influence."

1. BUILD will continue to press Burrell for a meeting. If you are disturbed by Mr. Burrell's letter, please email his Senior VP of Public Policy & Community Affairs, Maria Tildon, at maria.tildon@carefirst.org, or call and ask for him at 410-581-3000 with one message, "Mr. Burrell, why are you opposed to bringing more jobs and better health to our community? You have an opportunity to unite the city, instead you are dividing our city. Meet with BUILD. Come to the table with the hospitals, the HSCRC, and BUILD. To make two cities one, we must meet."

2. Please join BUILD at the HSCRC meeting on 11/18, 12pm, 4160 Patterson Ave, Baltimore, MD 21215

² <http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/news/2015/04/29/unrest-in-baltimore-highlights-need-for-more-jobs.html>