

# MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

*The political strength of healthcare is powerful  
when mobilized and motivated.*



## The Problem

A sole community hospital in a rural Northeast town was in dire financial straits. The board's solution was radical: To be the first hospital in their state to sell to an investor-owned healthcare company.

To accomplish this would require the first test of several state regulations and laws, the first review of a hospital conversion by the State Attorney General and the state Commissioner of Healthcare Access, the first foray by a hospital company into the state and the first explanation to a community about how the change would preserve their hospital and help it prosper.

It would require the vocal, sustained support of the hospital's medical community and the people they served. It would require strong relationships with local elected officials. It would require a steady and confident voice to the media.

It would require a campaign.

## The Solution

Over the course of the next two years, we managed an aggressive grassroots campaign that mobilized medical professionals and hospital staff, engaged elected officials and inspired the community.

All the elements of a successful campaign came into play:

- A dedicated, committed local campaign team
- Fast, accurate information
- Solid and consistent media relations
- Staying focused on the message
- Adapting to new opportunities
- Smartly using the tools of the trade: advertising, direct mail, community forums, rallies, bake-offs, public hearings, civic group presentations, and trips to the state capital.

Over time, two supportive community action groups emerged to voice their endorsement and to thwart the opposition, which included a branch of a Ralph Nader coalition. Hundreds rallied at local hearings to support the hospital. Even movie stars who happened to live in the area voiced their support.

## The Result

The healthcare community flexed its muscle. The state is now home to one investor-owned hospital that is stable and growing. The hospital won. The community won.