

SUPREME COURT OF WASHINGTON

Skagit County Public Hospital District No. 304 v. Skagit County Public Hospital District No. 1

177 Wash. 2d 718 (2013) · Decided July 11, 2013

SUMMARY

The Washington Supreme Court held that a rural public hospital district may not provide health care services within the boundaries of another rural public hospital district without that district's permission. Applying the statutory framework and the rule against duplicative municipal functions, the court concluded that the hospital district acted in excess of its jurisdiction. The court also held that the trial court did not abuse its discretion in finding that no plain, speedy, and adequate remedy was available, and it affirmed issuance of the writ of prohibition.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Washington
WRITING FOR THE COURT	González, J.; Owens, J.; Fairhurst, J.; J.M. Johnson, J.; Wiggins, J.; Chambers, J. Pro Tem.
JURISDICTION	Washington
DECIDED	July 11, 2013
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal from a Snohomish County Superior Court order issuing a writ of prohibition against Skagit Valley Hospital.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The statutory interpretation issue was reviewed de novo. The determination whether a plain, speedy, and adequate remedy existed was reviewed for abuse of discretion; a decision is an abuse of discretion when manifestly unreasonable or based on untenable grounds or reasons.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Washington Supreme Court opinion; precedential.
PARTIES	Skagit County Public Hospital District No. 1, doing business as Skagit Valley Hospital v. Skagit County Public Hospital District No. 304, doing business as United General Hospital

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether a rural public hospital district may provide medical services within the boundaries of another rural public hospital district without that district's permission.
2. Whether the superior court abused its discretion by finding that United General lacked a plain, speedy, and adequate remedy in the ordinary course of legal procedure.

HOLDINGS

1. A rural public hospital district may not provide health care services within the boundaries of another rural public hospital district without that district's permission.
2. The superior court did not abuse its discretion by finding that United General lacked a plain, speedy, and adequate remedy in the ordinary course of legal procedure.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A writ of prohibition is a drastic measure, which is to be issued only when two conditions are met: “(1) [a]bsence or excess of jurisdiction, and (2) absence of a plain, speedy, and adequate remedy in the course of legal procedure. The absence of either one precludes the issuance of the writ.”” (at 723)

“The statutory framework governing rural PHDs indicates that a rural PHD may not provide health care services within the boundaries of another rural PHD without that PHD’s permission.” (at 730)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Skagit County Public Hospital District No. 1, doing business as Skagit Valley Hospital, acquired the assets of a medical practice that operated several clinics, including Unit 2 of a commercial building within the territory of Skagit County Public Hospital District No. 304, doing business as United General Hospital. United General opposed the acquisition and asserted that Skagit Valley needed its permission to operate within United General's boundaries. Skagit Valley nevertheless began providing medical services at Unit 2.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

United General Hospital sued Skagit Valley Hospital in Snohomish County Superior Court after Skagit Valley acquired a medical practice operating a clinic within United General's boundaries. United General sought declaratory, injunctive, and prohibition relief. The superior court issued and stayed a writ of prohibition pending appellate review, and Skagit Valley appealed directly to the Washington Supreme Court.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Kreidler v. Eikenberry, 111 Wn.2d 828, 766 P.2d 438 (1989)
- State ex rel. Ernst v. Superior Court, 198 Wash. 133, 87 P.2d 294 (1939)
- Winsor v. Bridges, 24 Wash. 540, 64 P. 780 (1901)
- Dep't of Ecology v. Campbell & Gwinn, LLC, 146 Wn.2d 1, 43 P.3d 4 (2002)
- Alderwood Water District v. Pope & Talbott, Inc., 62 Wn.2d 319, 382 P.2d 639 (1963)
- Wash. Fed'n of State Emps. v. Office of Fin. Mgmt., 121 Wn.2d 152, 849 P.2d 1201 (1993)
- Amalgamated Transit Union Legislative Council of Wash. State v. State, 145 Wn.2d 544, 40 P.3d 656 (2002)
- In re Marriage of Kovacs, 121 Wn.2d 795, 854 P.2d 629 (1993)
- Pub. Util. Dist. No. 1 of Pend Oreille County v. Town of Newport, 38 Wn.2d 221, 228 P.2d 766 (1951)
- City of Tacoma v. Taxpayers of Tacoma, 108 Wn.2d 679, 743 P.2d 793 (1987)
- Okeson v. City of Seattle, 150 Wn.2d 540, 78 P.3d 1279 (2003)
- Skagit County Pub. Hosp. Dist. No. 1 v. Dep't of Revenue, 158 Wn. App. 426, 242 P.3d 909 (2010)
- State ex rel. O'Brien v. Police Court, 14 Wn.2d 340, 128 P.2d 332 (1942)
- In re Marriage of Littlefield, 133 Wn.2d 39, 940 P.2d 1362 (1997)
- Johnson v. Morris, 87 Wn.2d 922, 557 P.2d 1299 (1976)
- Resident Action Council v. Seattle Hous. Auth., 177 Wn.2d 417, 300 P.3d 376 (2013)
- Bowles v. Dep't of Ret. Sys., 121 Wn.2d 52, 847 P.2d 440 (1993)
- Morin v. Johnson, 49 Wn.2d 275, 300 P.2d 569 (1956)