The original documents are located in Box 13, “8/10/75 - Talking Points: St. Edward Mercy Medical Center, Fort Smith, Arkansas” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THANK YOU, PAUL  
(Cong. Hammerschmidt introduces you)

GOVERNOR PRIOR
SENATOR MCCLELLAN
CONG. RAY THORNTON
CONG. THEODORE RISENHOOVER
SISTER JUDITH KEITH
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
TALKING POINTS:
ST. EDWARD MERCY MEDICAL CENTER
FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS
SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 1975

1. I CONGRATULATE ALL INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION OF THIS VERY SPECIAL "HOSPITAL OF TOMORROW" TO SERVE MORE THAN ONE-HALF MILLION PEOPLE IN WESTERN ARKANSAS AND EASTERN OKLAHOMA. THIS NEW FACILITY IS AN OUTSTANDING ADDITION TO THE THRIVING MEDICAL COMMUNITY IN FORT SMITH.
SINCE ITS FOUNDING BY THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN 1905, ST. EDWARD HAS PROVIDED VITAL HEALTH SERVICES TO THIS CITY AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

1a. THE TWO MILLION DOLLAR FUND DRIVE COMBINED WITH A 14.2 MILLION DOLLAR FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION GUARANTEED LOAN FINANCED THIS FACILITY. I AM PROUD TO SAY I SPONSORED THE LEGISLATION IN THE CONGRESS TO PROVIDE FOR THIS TYPE OF F.H.A. LOAN TO PRIVATE HOSPITALS.
2. I commend your concern about the health needs of the 65,000 people of this city as well as rural area residents in Arkansas and neighboring Oklahoma. This facility will help to meet their medical needs.

3. The decision, made in 1967, to design a center to provide top-quality health care at reduced costs showed an understanding of one of the major problems in our health care system.
THE INNOVATIVE DESIGN OF ST. EDWARD WITH AUTOMATION AND CENTRALIZATION OF SERVICES WILL HELP KEEP COSTS LOW AND QUALITY OF PATIENT CARE HIGH.

AND YOUR PLAN TO COMBINE THE FORT SMITH CENTER WITH SMALLER RURAL HOSPITALS SHOWS YOUR FORWARD THINKING. I UNDERSTAND YOU ARE ALREADY WORKING WITH NINE SMALLER HOSPITALS IN THE AREA IN A GROUP PURCHASING PROGRAM TO HELP ACHIEVE LOWER COSTS.

4. ST. EDWARD SHOWED ITS WILLINGNESS TO BREAK NEW GROUND IN MEDICAL CARE WITH ITS EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROGRAM. ONE OF THE FIRST PILOT EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTRY, ST. EDWARD CONTINUES TO SERVE AS THE CONTROL CENTER FOR THIS REGION.
I understand just last week the hospital offered its skilled emergency treatment to 30 national guardsmen injured when high winds struck Fort Chaffee.

5. Medical progress is achieved when new techniques and knowledge are available to all our citizens. Your use of technology to improve patient care will serve as an example to other medical facilities. Your success will inspire others to search for more creative and efficient methods of providing health care.
6. The best equipment, the latest technology and the finest medical skills must be combined with compassion and care if a hospital is to serve all of an individual's needs.

The motto of St. Edward's is -- "Through our love of God and compassion for our fellow men, we serve."

This hospital from its beginnings in 1905 to today has translated those words into community outreach. For instance, the sponsorship by the hospital of a Vietnamese family of seven and the employment of two refugees point up that this facility is more than just a fine place to practice medicine. It is also a center which cares.
7. I AM PROUD TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS DEDICATION, BECAUSE OF ST. EDWARD'S PROUD PAST AND ITS BRIGHT FUTURE.

END OF TEXT