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10-090

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RECEIVED

JUN 24 2011

HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

June 22, 2011

Ms. Courtney R. Avery, Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson, Second Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Re.: Centegra Health System versus Mercy Health System in McHenry County

Dear Ms. Avery,

I hope that this letter reaches you in time prior to the Review Board's consideration of Project Number 10-090, Centegra Hospital in Huntley.

Newspaper articles and editorials regarding this project focus on the big picture of what the Mercy or Centegra health organizations might have to offer McHenry County. Finances are mentioned, jobs, number of patients to be served, etc.

These are all important, but sometimes it's interesting to look at the little things, too. This is the story of a little thing.

On January 25, I went to Mercy Woodstock Medical Center for a blood draw. Standard procedure, or so I thought. I was wrong. That blood draw was the most painful I've ever experienced. During the ensuing days and weeks, sharp lightning zaps of pain down my arm made normal life nearly impossible. Almost any activity could leave me immobilized and gasping with pain. In short, I was suddenly disabled.

My initial contacts with several managers at Mercy, including the director of the Center, resulted in no information as to how this could have happened or whether this might go on for the rest of my life. I was puzzled that every individual with whom I spoke said that they had never heard of something like this. Anxious and in pain, I made an appointment with my neurologist who ordered electromyography – a painful procedure during which an electric current is passed through muscles and nerves to test their function.

Almost a month after the blood draw, I received a letter from the director of Mercy Woodstock in which she said that she, the laboratory physician medical director and the director of the laboratory reviewed my experience and "found the phlebotomist practice to be appropriate." Since none of them were present when the incident occurred, it's difficult for me to understand how they could describe the practice to be "appropriate," especially as it resulted in pain and incapacitation.

After their group consult and a check with the Association of Clinical Chemistry, it was determined that a nerve injury following a blood draw can happen, the "pain may persist for one to four weeks," and "this may be inconvenient and may be unpleasant."

I wish I had been given the information when I first contacted Mercy that the possibility of nerve injury did, indeed, exist. It also would have helped me to know how long the pain might last. Instead, I was left hurting and uncertain as to what the future might hold. Neurology consults and the EMG might not even have been necessary. To call Mercy's response clumsy public relations would be a kindness, and words such as "inconvenient" and "unpleasant" only add insult to injury. Needless to say, I will never have any procedure done at Mercy again, nor would I recommend Mercy Health System to anyone.

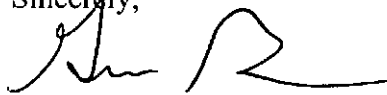
Should the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board determine that a new hospital would be a positive addition to health care in McHenry County, it is my earnest hope that you will grant this privilege and responsibility to Centegra Health System. Every procedure and interaction I have had with anyone at Centegra has been positive, and I would enjoy seeing this level of care expanded.

I believe it's also important to consider that Centegra has already invested heavily in our communities with a history of commitment to excellent health care, friendly and efficient professionals and a pleasant environment for patients and their visitors.

Mercy, on the other hand, is headquartered in Janesville, Wisconsin. If one has a question about a bill or quality of care, one has to phone Janesville. I don't see a commitment to McHenry County in this.

Centegra is the health system best suited to provide expanded health care services in McHenry County.

Sincerely,



Gwen Godfrey

Enclosures:

Copy of letter from me to Mercy Health System

Copy of letter from Mercy to me

Gwen Godfrey 2 Schober Dr. Cary, IL 60013 Tel.: 847 639-1636

Jan. 28, 2011

Customer Relations Dept., Attn.: Jean
Mercy Health Care System
3922 Mercy Dr.
McHenry, IL 60050-3151

Copies to: Jan Botts, Michelle Kaiser, Valerie Johns, Carol Ostrum

Re.: Sharp pains after a blood draw

Dear Jean,

At the request of Jan Botts, I am writing to you to describe an unpleasant incident and its after-effects. During the afternoon of Jan. 25th, I went to the lab at Mercy Woodstock to have blood drawn at the request of Dr. Khanna. He didn't tell me to go to that lab; I could have gone anywhere; I chose the Mercy lab because it was convenient and a previous experience there had been pleasant. However, that Jan. 25th blood draw (in the left arm) was excruciatingly painful – probably the worst I've ever experienced. My whole body tensed, I arched my back, and I said, "Ow ow ow ow!" The phlebotomist was calm, and the pain was over as soon as she was finished with the procedure. I remarked, "Boy! That hurt!" She didn't seem concerned and replied, "Oh, maybe I hit a nerve," or that perhaps "some alcohol had gotten into the site."

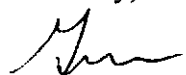
During the days following that blood draw, I have been experiencing sharp shooting pains in the forearm when I turn my forearm, wrist or hand. This happens most frequently when I'm washing my hands or doing anything that requires that slight turn, often with lifting or any pressure on the hand. This has impacted everything I do. Simple tasks such as opening a drawer or turning a door knob can leave me gasping with pain. Ordinary household tasks have to be carefully rethought and planned so that I don't drop something or injure myself. In addition to these sharp pains, I sometimes experience the strange sensation of water running over or under my skin along the forearm.

It bears mentioning that, in the past, nurses and phlebotomists who have drawn blood always exclaimed about my "great" or "beautiful" veins (their words, not mine). They remarked how visible the veins were and how easy I was to work on. So I am puzzled by the experience on Jan. 25th.

I need the full use of my left arm, which I currently don't have. I feel impaired. I will let this go for a few more days. If the situation hasn't improved by next week, I'll make an appointment with my neurologist to get a better understanding of what's happening and how long it may go on. I fervently hope it won't last for the rest of my life.

I appreciate the concerns and sympathy expressed by all at Mercy with whom I or my husband spoke. Obviously, you people care. Thank you for your help with all this.

Sincerely,



Gwen Godfrey



2000 LAKE AVE.
WOODSTOCK, IL 60098
815.337.7100



MERCY WOODSTOCK MEDICAL CENTER

MercyHealthSystem.org

February 21, 2011

Ms. Gwen Godfrey
2 Schober Dr.
Cary, IL 60013

Dear Ms. Godfrey,

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me and discuss your concern. I appreciate the opportunity your feedback provides to review our services we provide at Mercy Woodstock Medical Center.

From your letter and our recent conversation I understand that you had pain in your arm following a blood draw in our laboratory. I, the laboratory physician medical director and the director of the laboratory reviewed your experience. We found the phlebotomist practice to be appropriate. According to the Association of Clinical Chemistry and our physician medical director there is a rare possibility of having a tiny branch of one of the sensory nerves of the arm running over the surface of the vein punctured by the needle causing a short, sharp electric-shock type pain. In rare cases this pain may persist for one to four weeks as the nerve heals. Although this may be inconvenient and may be unpleasant, it eventually heals up.

We apologize for not exceeding your expectations which is our goal at Mercy Health System. It is never our intention for our service to create a less than positive experience. While the experience has not been positive, we do appreciate your candor and position. I truly hope your visit to the Neurologist is helpful and your arm heals soon.

We continuously strive to provide quality healthcare and service to our patients. We greatly appreciate you sharing your concerns. I look forward to hearing from you following your visit with the Neurologist.

Please feel free to contact me at (815) 337-1540 if I can be of further assistance. Our Customer Relations Department may also be contacted at (608) 756-6810 for any future comments for Mercy Health System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Valerie Johns'.

Valerie Johns
Director Mercy Woodstock Medical Center