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Not For Motion Practice or Pleadings

19 August 2022

Via Email Only

Michael Welsh, MS, RD
Interim Medical Center Director
VA Phoenix Health Care
Michael.Welsh@va.gov

Tanya J. Bradsher
Chief of Staff for the Department of Veterans Affairs
Tanya.bradsher@va.gov

RE: Veteran Gary Rinsem

Dear Mr. Welsh and Ms. Bradsher:

I represent the *Military Religious Freedom Foundation* [MRFF], which is a tax-exempt civil rights organization for members of our military and veterans. I am also a veteran. I am writing to you about a client of MRFF, Mr. Gary Rinsem and his abysmal treatment by the Phoenix VA Health Care Center. Mr. Rinsem advised MRFF that he has a debilitating and life-threatening medical condition which has been addressed by the Phoenix medical facility until just recently.

Mr. Rinsem further advised MRFF that his VA Primary Care Physician [PCP] was Dr. Fred Cheron. That is until Mr. Rinsem filed a complaint about the incessant religious proselytizing by Dr. Cheron. At that juncture, contrary to the Hippocratic Oath to “do no harm or injustice” to a patient, Dr. Cheron—without any due process—terminated his PCP status with Mr. Rinsem. That effectively bars him from any and all medical care at the Phoenix facility, except for emergency care. Mr. Rinsem’s complaint went no where. He then got the Patient Advocate involved in an attempt to ameliorate the situation. The explanation, blindly following a bureaucratic rule, Mr. Rinsem learned that without a PCP, he can only get emergency care, not the on-going medical care he needs and has received for years. He was told that it will take one and one-half to two months before a new PCP is assigned *and* that it would be another one and one-half to two months to get an appointment. Without medical treatment, he may not live that long!

I don’t have to tell you that the law entitles him to medical care, not medical neglect. MRFF attempted to reach out to your District Chief Counsel, Mark Romaneski, Esq.—no one answered the phone and no one responded to MRFF’s voice-mail message about this. It is equally as disgusting

ADMITTED BEFORE:

Supreme Court of the United States; U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces; U.S. Court of Federal Claims; and New York State Courts

for Mr. Mikey Weinstein, Esq., the President of MRFF (also a veteran), to be stone-walled for attempting to resolve clearly illegal religious conversion attempts. I am also outraged by the fact that a VA physician, having a patient who is wheel-chair bound with a serious medical condition requiring on-going access to medical care, can simply utilize an administrative process to unilaterally terminate that medical care! It would seem obvious that medical *ethics* would require a physician with a patient with Mr. Rinsem's conditions, to first make a substitute PCP available prior to terminating the physician-patient relationship.

On behalf of my client, MRFF, I respectfully demand that you give this matter your immediate and serious consideration. Furthermore, as MRFF previously demanded, this includes the following:

- (1) immediate assignment of a new Primary Care Physician given the severe exigency of his life-threatening medical condition;
- (2) immediate and aggressive investigation of his now former Primary Care physician, Dr. Fred Cheron, regarding the serious allegations of religious proselytizing of our client.....and who knows how many OTHER VA patients Dr. Cheron may have similarly proselytized in the past, is now proselytizing or may proselytize in the future if not stopped NOW!?!?;
- (3) to be welcomed back immediately in full good standing by the Phoenix VA

You are authorized to communicate with me via email (below).

Respectfully submitted,

/eS/ **Donald G. Rehkopf, Jr.**

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cc: Mikey Weinstein, Esq.

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