

Senator William S. Cohen
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Dear Senator Cohen,

We have a common foe, that is Medicare fraud and mistreatment of the elderly (eg. unnecessary treatments; 'therapy' and radiation). I am mailing copies of this letter with enclosures to all members of Special Committee on Aging and the Office of the Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services in Baltimore, M.D.

My husband, Harry E. Snow, and myself have been married for 48 years. He retired from Lockheed/Sanders after 25 years service to the company. In World War II he was a Sargent in the 314th Bombardment Wing; radar crewman, Air Offensive Japan and Eastern Mandates. On May 15th of this year, at the age of 72, he died from a malignant tumor that had entered his spinal cord. It was a very horrible death and the mistreatment that he received at Tampa General previous to his death is nothing short of thievery and torture.

Fraudulent and padded billing from Tampa General reflects the attitude and arrogance of staff at Tampa General Hospital.

The bill from Tampa General was severely padded (e.g. Percocet 5 mg. tablet at \$ 84.00, a Librax cap at \$12.00 and at \$9.00) and had many fraudulently entered bills one of the more blatant is a \$109.00 plastic toilet seat. My son called Duro-Med and was told that the suggested retail price of these plastic toilet seats is \$17.14.

I will briefly describe what I have seen and was done to my husband. For three years his primary care physician (John Batista, M.D. of Spring Hill) had told us that Harry's deterioration in walking and pain was due to Paget's Disease. I went in with Harry at every visit. On 1/21/94 Dr. Batista began prescribing continuous increasing dosages of narcotics to my husband. Harry had lost 30 lbs in the past three weeks before his hospitalization and was in excruciating pain. Dr. Batista did not offer to perform any tests to find out what was causing this excruciating pain.

We contacted Charlene Waldman (executive director of the Paget's Foundation) for information. She sent us a list of specialists and we took Harry by a stretcher service to Dr. Frankle in Tampa. Dr. Frankle told us that the little amount of Paget's disease that Harry had would not cause such severe pain and inability to walk. He speculated bone metastasis. He tried to locate someone to admit him in a hospital in Tampa, but said that he could not reach anyone. The stretcher service returned my husband home and I called Dr. Batista. Dr. Batista told both my son and myself to bring my husband to a hospital in another county which later we found out he was not even on staff at.

(Dr. John Batista withheld both my late husband's and my medical records even though he was given a release form from myself and my husband dated 5/4/94. We had to ask an attorney to get the records for us. Dr. Batista charged \$50. On 9/12/94 we

received copies of my husband's medical records. They were substantially rewritten. To date Dr. Batista continues to withhold my medical records).

At Bayonet Point Hospital, CT scans were done and a large tumor was found at the base of his spine. After running thousands of dollars of tests a doctor told my husband that the doctors were more qualified at Tampa General to handle his condition. A bone scan was also done on my husband, but when we were given the film, it was of another patient. When Bayonet Point Hospital was contacted they said that they probably dropped Harry's bone scan on the floor. I don't know what that was about, but the radiologist and hospital submitted a bill for this lost or incorrect scan to Medicare.

At 11:00 at night on 4/19/94, my husband was transported to Tampa General Hospital. I strongly suspect that my husband was transferred because the physicians knew that he was dying and didn't want him to die in their hospital.

In Tampa Hospital, Harry was wheeled in a stretcher to have tests done. There were bumps on the floors and the attendant would slam the gurney to get over the bumps which would cause severe pain in my husband. Friends of the family were with me and they witnessed the mistreatment of my husband; letters enclosed.

At Tampa General Hospital, Harry was placed in thigh high elastic stockings that were very slippery. The side rails were not lifted, he tried to sit up in the bed and slipped off the bed and onto the floor. His hip was broken. Later this nurse told me that my husband 'climbed over the rail'. My husband told my son and myself that the nurse did forget to put up the side rail and he slipped off the bed. He said that his nylon stockings had no grip to stop his fall. He mentioned that there was nothing for him to grab hold on to. We made tape recordings of our conversations.

My son contacted Tampa General as Medicare was sent a bill for all the services for the broken hip that they had caused. He was told that the attending nurse had told their 'damage control department' that my husband climbed over the railing.

My husband had a malignant tumor that had entered his spine at the fifth lumbar extending out the other side of his spinal cord and down into his sacrum. He was in no condition to or had the strength to "climb over any rails." He had been unable to walk more than a few feet, never mind 'jump' or 'climb' over a railing.

It was 24 hours later before his hip was operated on. Just the surgeon bill for the hip was initially \$3200.00 before adjustment, beside all the bills that went along.

Since then I have found out that many patients are being mistreated at Tampa General. One patient said not to complain or that they would mistreat the patients further. During the course of the mistreatment of my husband, a team of half a dozen doctors were in disagreement on what type of cancer my husband had and what to do. Harry had multiple types of cancer.

Dr. Assad, the radiologist, told myself and a friend of the family that the radiation would kill the pain, but my husband's condition was terminal and that he would only live one year. This statement was also told to my son by another physician at Tampa General.

Dr. Assad also said about himself, "I am the best." Before any biopsy was done, Dr. Assad wanted to treat my husband with radiation. Harry and I agreed for the radiation as we were told that it would kill the pain. He was severely burned from the radiation and it increased the pain.

Harry was given laxatives which caused him to loose control of his bowels. Even with complaints from my husband, these laxatives were continued. To this the nurses would not bring him a bed pan and he would go in the bed. The nurses were angered that he went in the bed and treated him very roughly.

After Harry's hip was broken, a therapist began forcing Harry to walk under the guise of 'rehabilitation.' Harry asked for a bed pan and this person made him try to walk. My husband lost control of his bowels all over himself.

After being released from Tampa General, my husband was seen by an oncologist at our home, and we were told that he had no more than two weeks to live. Hospice was called in immediately to help us.

The use of radiation on my husband had no justification. None of us were told the truth that it would cause serious burns, may not relieve pain and was ineffective; he was dying and there was nothing that could be done. He should have been sent home.

I went to see Harry at the hospital every other day. I saw what was going on. I also called him every night at 8 PM. Five days after being given radiation, my husband wanted to come home; a physician convinced him to continue with the radiation.

On the day of his release I caught 'a therapist' forcing my husband to try to walk on atrophied legs. Harry was cringing with pain; being forced to suffer so that the hospital could make more money out of a dying man. The therapist had a belt around my husband and a tether attached to it which my husband and this man held onto. Harry's arms were shaking and his legs wobbled on the brink of folding under him. He told my husband to try to put his weight onto the leg that was not broken and walk. I told this therapist that he was hurting my husband and to stop it immediately.

That day, Joanne (nurse) told me that I should send Harry to a therapy center. She said that you are going to have your hands full taking him home as he cannot understand. My husband's mind was very clear until the day of his death. Joanne (nurse) repeatedly told me that he should be sent to a specific rehabilitation center, which I would not do as Harry had been crying to come home. He wanted to come home to die in peace.

On that same day, Harry was given more radiation, three Percocets, an injection of morphine and taken by an ambulance home.

When he arrived home there was feces all over him. He was severely burned and had been given a prescription to take one or two Percocets every six hours by Lucy Love, M.D. This dosage being totally useless to control the severity of his pain. Through out the time when Harry was in Tampa General, Dr. Love would not take my calls or return my calls.

We had to call the fire department to pick him up and bring him to bed as he could put weight on his legs.

In an attempt to control the pain, we gave him 2 Percocets every six hours, then every 4 hours and then every 2 hours until an oncologist was called in and he was immediately placed on morphine tablets. This was then increased to Duragesic 50 mcg. (Fentanyl) patch and liquid morphine.

Harry kept asking for ice cream when he came home. He said, "I'm burning up." Before he died he said, "They tortured me there. They've taken it to the extreme; they killed me."

Nine days after being released from Tampa General Hospital he died. Since then Tampa General has withheld his medical paperwork even though he signed a release form for them on May 5, 1994.

I know that if this was done to your wife, father or any member of your family that you would be hurt and angered as I, my son and our friends. I hope that you will investigate what has been done to my husband; I am seventy years old and this is devastating. My husband had a small piece of his vocal cord and could only whisper, so he suffered a lot and could not cry out. These medical practitioners are parasites; they mistreated and brutalized my husband with unnecessary painful useless treatments and 'therapies'. They steal from Medicare as they drained the last bit of life out of my husband to make more money.

Your attention into what has been done to my husband is greatly appreciated; we can not battle them alone; the elderly need representation more then ever.

Sincerely,

Marie-Paule Snow

- Enclosures:
- 1) Photograph of the severe burns and negligence on my husband's body upon arrival home from Tampa General. Stapled to cover letter.
 - 2) Letter from Mr. Alexander L. Alberice
 - 3) Letter from Mr. Linwood A. Seaverns
 - 4) Letter from my son, Otto E. Snow on Tampa General Medicare fraud, billing that Medicare paid, paperwork on the ineffectiveness of radiation on this type of cancer and billing.
 - 5) Letter from my son, Otto E. Snow on Bayonet Point Hospital bone scan discrepancies and billings.

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