

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

ACTION REFERRAL

TO <i>Floyd</i>	DATE <i>4-15-08</i>
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DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY	ACTION REQUESTED
1. LOG NUMBER  <i>000537</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for the Director's signature DATE DUE _____
2. DATE SIGNED BY DIRECTOR  <i>cc: Jacobs</i> <i>Cleared 4/23/08, letter attached.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for appropriate signature DATE DUE <i>4-25-08</i>  <input type="checkbox"/> FOIA DATE DUE _____  <input type="checkbox"/> Necessary Action

APPROVALS (Only when prepared for director's signature)	APPROVE	* DISAPPROVE (Note reason for disapproval and return to preparer.)	COMMENT
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

**RECEIVED**

APR 15 2008

Department of Health & Human Services  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

First let me apologize for directing this correspondence to the DSS Director and the Beaufort County DSS Director. I was under the assumption that Medicaid was part of DSS. I have heard from the DSS Director in Beaufort County and she directed me to the right agency.

Director DHHHS

Ms. Emma Forkner

Ms. Joyce Hamilton  
Regional Supervisor

April 15, 2008

**RECEIVED**

## From:

Lula M. King  
869 Twin Lakes Drive  
Sumter, SC 29154  
803-481-5815

APR 15 2008

Department of Health & Human Services  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

## To:

Director DHHS  
Ms. Emma Forkner  
1801 Main Street  
Columbia, SC 29202  
Fax: 255-8235

## SUBJECT: Complaint

Approximately 2 weeks prior to April 3, 2008 I called the Hilton Head DSS Office in an attempt to get some information regarding Medicaid and was told to contact the office in Bluffton. My goal was to find out what documents were required to assist my brother, John Hamilton (lives in Bluffton) in applying for benefits, so that when I traveled from Sumter (about 2 hour drive) to assist him, I would have the needed documents.

I called the Bluffton office and left messages continuously for a period of over a week (two-three messages a day) to the voice mail of Ms. Simmons. I did not receive a return call. I left a message, if not two at the Beaufort Office (Medicaid) and did not receive a return call either.

Without receiving a return call, on April 3, 2008 I took the trip to Bluffton from Sumter to assist my brother in applying for Medicaid benefits. After sharing with the individual what we needed she gave us an application to complete. I asked her what documents were needed and she did not know. She attempted to call someone (later found out it was someone in the Beaufort Office), they did not answer. The worker then sent an electronic message and her phone rang, anyhow after she joked with the other person about not answering the phone, she hung the phone up and she told me what was needed.

I then shared with her that I had called that office (Bluffton) numerous times and had not yet received a return call. I told her I had left the messages for Candy or Candice Simmons, she acknowledged being Ms. Simmons. She then told me that she had over 500 calls on her phone and does not return calls (with no concern). She added she wished there was a way to delete all the old calls without having to listen to them. I was in awe (actually shocked that she would admit to a customer/client that she intentionally does not return calls and would delete them without listening to them if the system would allow). I asked her how did one get information or basic assistance if she did not answer the phone for customers or return calls. She did not respond, but lazily looked around at her computer screen.

After about an hour in the office (filling out the application) and waiting for her to lazily removed staples and make copies she got additional information from someone in Beaufort that my brother needed his banking information. (I had to leave her office, go to the local library to access the internet to get this info and return.) Before leaving, I asked her if I could call her office back with the information and she looked at me, didn't say anything (kind of like "did you not understand I don't answer the phone for customers?"). I said something like "Oh, that's right you don't answer the phone when customers call in." She didn't try to make any excuse. I told her I would return with the necessary information.

Upon our return she was on the speaker phone conversing with a friend (based on the conversation) and did not attempt to hang up. She attempted to help us while continuing to converse with the individual on the speaker phone. After I told her we would wait because I did not want to share my brother's personal information with just anybody, she told the person on the other line she would call them back later. I completed the necessary document and asked for a copy. I asked her how long would it take to process the application and she said she could not tell me as it was processed in Beaufort. I did not want to bother her to ask this question of the processor in Beaufort and she did not offer to do it.

I then informed Ms. Simmons that it brought me dire concern about her not responding to phone calls and her lack of professionalism (specifically as it relates to professionalism I spoke of her telling me she did not return calls or answer phone calls and attempting to do business with me while on a speaker phone in a conversation that appeared to be personal, but was definitely not dealing with my brother's business). I then told her that I was going to file a written complaint regarding what I had encountered at the office in Bluffton. I shared with her it was not my intent to cause difficulty for her in these dire economic times, but the service or lack of professional service was quite concerning for me. My sharing of my discontent with the service and intent to file a complaint did not seem to faze her.

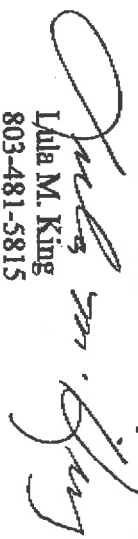
NOTE: There was another lady in an adjoining office (that shared she worked with foster home licensing) that overheard some of our conversation as well as my brother.

Here are some of my concerns. I am guessing that most of the customers that tend to need services from this office have some difficulty maneuvering the system with a worker who is responsive, courteous, and caring. Imagine them encountering Ms. Simmons with the attitude she had on April 3. I know that had I sent my brother to that office alone he would have come out not applying because first he doesn't understand the system, probably read on a third or fourth grade level (would need help filling out application), and being a nice person would not want to impose on Ms. Simmons.

Ms. Simmons is the only one that works in this office and it appears that the customers who needs assistance (by telephone) are not getting it (based on her saying she doesn't answer the phone or return calls). I believe Bluffton and the County of Beaufort deserves someone who wants to tend to the needs of the customers whether it's by phone, email or in person. They surely deserve someone who wants to or is willing to tend to their needs in a professional manner, not while trying to converse on a speaker phone.

My brother, John Hamilton (SSN: 247-72-5771) was the applicant applying for service and the undersigned was there assisting him.

I am respectfully requesting a response/acknowledgement of to this correspondence. Also if I can get some information on the processing time/status of his application, it would be appreciated. We completed a form that Ms. Simmons provided, that should allow me access to my brother's information.

  
Lula M. King  
803-481-5815

Cc: Ms. Joyce Hamilton  
Regional Supervisor  
P.O. Box 110  
Walterboro, SC 29488  
FAX: 843-549-1172



Copy 1537 ✓

State of South Carolina  
Department of Health and Human Services

Mark Sanford  
Governor

Emma Forkner  
Director

April 23, 2008

Ms. Lula M. King  
869 Twin Lakes Drive  
Sumter, South Carolina 29154

Dear Ms. King:

Thank you for writing our agency regarding the problems you encountered in our Beaufort County offices when submitting the Medicaid application for your brother, John Hamilton. Good customer service is very important to us, and I regret your unpleasant experience during our eligibility determination process. We are reviewing the issues you have encountered, and we are working to correct them.

Joyce Hamilton has been in touch with you regarding these issues. Ms. Hamilton is the Regional Administrator who oversees our Beaufort County Offices. She is working with you to obtain the required documentation necessary to process your brother's application for Medicaid's Aged, Blind or Disabled (ABD) program. Once the documentation is received, we will expedite Mr. Hamilton's application. We will also monitor your brother's application progress and keep you informed of developments as they occur. Please call Ms. Hamilton at (843) 549-1894, ext. 258, if you have any concerns or questions about the application process.

Again, we apologize for the unprofessional treatment you received in our Medicaid offices and thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

Sincerely,

Raymond J. Floyd  
Deputy Director

RJF/cole

- c: Joyce Hamilton, Regional Administrator – Region V Medicaid Offices  
Cindy Carron, Director of Local Eligibility Processing – Columbia State Office

Medicaid Eligibility and Beneficiary Services  
P.O. Box 8206 • Columbia, South Carolina 29202-8206  
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