

March 28, 2015

Sarah Kirby, Chief Administrator  
Palmetto Health Baptist Parkridge  
400 Palmetto Health Pkwy.  
Columbia, SC 29212

RE: Patient: Phil R. Huggins  
Account #: 1501500585  
Date of Service: 1/15/15

Dear Ms. Kirby:

This letter is in regard to the above referenced matter.

Phil Huggins had out-patient surgery for a routine hernia surgical procedure in your facility on January 15, 2015. On January 8, 2015 we were requested to make pre-payment of \$500.00 made to Palmetto Health Baptist Parkridge. A check was provided on that date.

We were shocked to receive a bill on March 3, 2015 from Palmetto Health Baptist Parkridge in the amount of \$2,826.29. The total charges for the January 15, 2015 out-patient treatment came to **\$23,741.00**. We called the number provided for Patient Financial Services on March 3, 2015 and asked why \$500.00 was not shown or deducted from the bill since this check was made payable to Palmetto Health Baptist Parkridge. After being put on hold, we were told that a corrected bill would be sent showing a new balance less \$500.00. We immediately requested an itemized bill.

Upon receipt of the itemized bill, it was noted there were several exorbitant charges; especially for anesthetic drugs and supply implants. In seeking clarification of the bill we called to set up a meeting with someone who could go over the bill. We were told to call someone else or were transferred to several departments. After several calls and a trip to the hospital to obtain complete medical records an appointment was made with a customer service representative. The representative was unable to explain why some charges did not appear to match the medical record chart and why some charges were so high. The representative sent the itemized bill and medical records to be audited. We were told it would take about 10 days.

After 10 days we called the representative and he said the audit had not been finalized and would be another 7-10 days. We said we would call back in 4 days. We called again on March 26, 2014 and were told the audit found nothing wrong. We asked to set up a meeting with the auditor to go over the audit. We were told the auditor would call back. The representative did provide the auditor's name (Sandra Lyke) but would not provide a phone number. Since Ms. Lyke did not call back, the next day we called again to find out who was Ms. Lyke's supervisor but were not given a name or number. Again we were told the audit was correct. We expressed that we really needed to meet with someone about the bill and audit. We were promised a call back yesterday from an auditor over Ms. Lyke. We never got a call so we are communicating with you.

Ms. Kirby, we want to address the following concerns about the over inflated charges that have off-the-chart mark-ups on the bill. Please review the following examples.

There was a charge of \$3,640.00 (please review an itemized bill for account # listed above) for Bupivacaine Liposome 266mg/20ML (post-surgical anesthesia also called Exparel). In doing research on the internet, we found a cost of \$285.00 for this drug on two sites and \$14.25 on another site (copies enclosed). **Your mark-up for this drug on your bill was 1,300% and 25,000% respectively!**

Your bill also showed general anesthesia charges of \$761.00 for initial 30 min. and \$570.00 times 2 for a total of \$1,901.00. Based on medical records the drug was versed (generic Midazolam). **Via internet research, the cost for one vial (see attached) is \$6.12. For your first drug charge the mark-up is 12,000% and for each of the \$570.00 charges the mark-up is 9,000%!**

Your bill indicated a charge of \$696.00 for supply implant mesh ultrapro plug uppl large. The internet price for this mesh was \$165.00. **Your mark-up is 400%!** There was another charge of \$1,270.00 for mesh proceed ventral PVPS 4.3 X 4.3 cm. The internet price was \$59.99 and **your mark-up is 2,100%!**

Now we are asked to pay a very high bill after our insurance paid the negotiated/agreed upon reimbursement. We are appealing to you to review this matter. We would expect our part of your bill be adjusted to a zero dollar amount due based on these unreasonable charges or at the very minimum a reduction of our bill by 75% or 50%.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We have copied the below recipients as we are very concerned about exorbitant medical costs and huge mark-ups. We expect that something can be done to better protect the consumer.

Sincerely,  
Phil and Linda Huggins  
PO Box 173  
Swansea, SC 29160

Cc: Charles D. Beaman, Jr. CEO  
John J Singerling III, President  
Palmetto Health  
1301 Taylor St. Ste 9A  
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✓ Governor Nikki Haley  
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Senator Lindsey Graham  
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Senator Raymond E. Cleary III  
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