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*Montaño vs Frezza*

To Whom it may concern:

I recently spoke with the Executive Director of Cardiovascular Health, a clinic in Lubbock. He informed me that there was a pending Supreme Court case in New Mexico that could impact whether services to New Mexico patients by Texas doctors and Texas hospitals and clinics would continue to be available. The doctor stated that because of the lower court ruling he has had to secure additional insurance to cover services offered to New Mexico patients seen in Texas. He further stated that doctors, hospitals, and clinics are considering whether they should continue to see New Mexico patients. This case has far reaching ramifications to residents in our area. Most eastern NM residents are unaware of what may happen and how quickly the medical service they currently have available in Texas may change.

As a former legislator in New Mexico (2001-2015) and a resident of Southeast NM, these comments by a Texas physician raise concerns. Rural areas of NM continue to struggle with attracting health care professionals in all fields. As a result, many patients are required to seek services outside their local community. Hobbs is 100 miles from Lubbock, TX and 80-90 miles from the Odessa/Midland, TX metro area. Albuquerque is over 300 miles away. I don't think I would be wrong to say that over 95 percent of specialty and emergency care services rendered to patients outside the local area are by Texas physicians, hospitals, and clinics. My wife and I have seen three different specialty doctors in Lubbock in the past six months. Two were by referral from a local physician and one visit was required because no services are available in Lea County.

My step-father, Madison Farris Nelson, who is 90 years old and a 54 year resident of Hobbs, was recently administered services by University Medical Center in Lubbock that saved his life. The referral to Lubbock was from a Hobbs physician. My step-father was also the recipient of heart by-pass surgery in 2003 at Lubbock Covenant Hospital after being airlifted from the hospital in Hobbs following a heart attack. My mother, Phyllis Maxine Nelson, who is 88, also receives referral specialty care from several different physicians/clinics in Lubbock.

If the ruling by the lower court in NM is not overturned, I believe that services offered to eastern NM residents may be impacted dramatically. As a result, older patients may choose to relocate to the larger metro areas of West Texas for healthcare services.

Future patients may die as a result of services not being available and timely offered. I think flight logs will show that hospital to hospital time from Hobbs to Albuquerque vs Lubbock or Odessa/Midland need to be considered. Helicopter service would not be practical to Albuquerque from Hobbs, requiring additional transfer time to and from local airports. Patient care would suffer as a result.

Can hospitals, clinics, and specialists in Albuquerque handle the increased patient load should services in West Texas no longer be available to NM residents? Will patients from NM who seek specialty care at hospitals like MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston be turned away in the future? How will the court's decision impact the decision employers make to locate in rural NM?

Please carefully consider the impact of the court's ruling on our state.

Warmest Regards,

  
Donald E. Bratton