

Amarillo Medical Legacy ACO

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Jon Opelt, Executive Director
Texas Alliance for Patient Access
P. O. Box 684157
Austin, Texas 78768-4157

Re: Impact of *Montano vs Frezza*

September 20, 2015

Dear Mr. Opelt:

Amarillo Legacy Medical ACO (ALMA) is a partnership of multiple independent medical groups that was formed in 2012 to improve the quality of care for our community, and to lower healthcare costs. ALMA is contracted with the Medicare Shared Savings Program to provide accountable care for almost 15,000 patients in our region, and additionally has multiple commercial contracts for quality improvement.

The participating medical groups of Amarillo Legacy Medical ACO are very concerned about the impact of this case affecting our ability to care for residents of New Mexico.

I am attaching a list of our participating medical groups, and their specialties. They total almost 200 medical providers in Amarillo. All of these groups see large numbers of New Mexico residents daily.

One of the constituent groups, Amarillo Medical Specialists (AMS) was able to provide exact statistics for us on short notice. AMS has 27 physicians, and in the year 2014 had 2,644 patient visits from New Mexico residents. Attached is a Google map of the approximate locations for these New Mexico residents. As you can see most of the patients are those in the eastern sections of New Mexico; however there are also a significant number of travelers from other sections of New Mexico who seek emergency care in Amarillo.

Amarillo physicians regularly serve as a backup for their New Mexico colleagues when they are not available to provide care. For instance, trauma cases from Union County and Clayton, New Mexico are routinely evacuated to Amarillo. Trauma cases from the Clovis, New Mexico area are frequently sent to Lubbock.

I was personally involved in a referral of a legislator who was flown to Amarillo from Santa Fe, New Mexico for a neurosurgical emergency. All of the neurosurgeons in Albuquerque were overloaded with other emergencies, and we were happy to assist them.

Amarillo provides a very large section of New Mexico with a host of specialty care. These services include endocrinology, rheumatology, nephrology, cardiology, orthopedic surgery, neurology, neurosurgery and oncology in Amarillo. We see patients from Raton, Clayton, Tucumcari, Clovis, and Portales in Amarillo on a daily basis.

Many of the commercial insurance plans in New Mexico are HMOs, which typically do not include Texas physicians. Patients in these plans must typically travel to Albuquerque even if Amarillo is closer. Thus a higher percentage of New Mexico residents who do come to Amarillo are on Medicare or are uninsured. Medicare patients in particular already have difficulty accessing an adequate number of specialist physicians in New Mexico. I would be concerned that the creation of dual Texas and New Mexico liability on Texas physicians will further reduce medical care accessibility to Medicare and uninsured patients living in eastern New Mexico.

Our physicians have always appreciated the opportunity to routinely serve any emergency or specialty healthcare needs for citizens of New Mexico. We have established long-term collaborative relationships with many primary care physicians in eastern New Mexico. Texas physicians fill an important gap in the health care system for this region of New Mexico.

I am concerned that the potential changes in liability may result in reduced access to healthcare for citizens in a large section of New Mexico. Since this region is thinly populated, it will be extremely difficult, or impossible, to replicate these vital medical specialties within a reasonable distance for these eastern New Mexico residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William C. Biggs M.D." The signature is written in a cursive style.

William C. Biggs, MD, FACE CEO and Medical Director
Amarillo Legacy Medical ACO, LLC

ALMA includes almost 200 physicians and nurse practitioners in the following organizations:

Amarillo Medical Specialists, LLP
Amarillo Family Physicians, PA
Family Medicine Center of Amarillo, PA
Family Medicine Center of Canyon, PA
Family Medicine Center - Cindy Hutson, PA
Panhandle Pediatric Group, PA
FMC Lubbock, LLC
FMC Clinics, PA
Amarillo Hospitalist, PA
Southwest Neuroscience and Spine Center, PA
Cardiology Center of Amarillo
Panhandle Obstetrics and Gynecology
BSA Harrington Physicians
BSA Amarillo Diagnostic Clinic
BSA Physicians Group

ALMA has physicians in the following specialities:

Family Medicine
Primary Care Internal Medicine
Endocrinology
Nephrology
Infectious Diseases
Pulmonary Medicine
Rheumatology
Gynecology
Obstetrics
Gynecologic Oncology
Neurology
Neurosurgery
Gastroenterology
Cardiology
Pediatrics
Hematology
Oncology
Nuclear Medicine
Radiation Therapy