

BB

Laham, Michael S

From: Laham, Michael S
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2007 6:41 AM
To: Cole, Cynthia M
Subject: RE: Mistreatment by Medical Insurance - Paid for by Boeing

15 January 2007

Cynthia Cole, President
Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA)
International Federation of Professional Technical Engineers (IFPTA) Local 2001, AFL-CIO, CLC
15205 52nd Ave South
Seattle, WA 98188

SUBJECT: Mistreatment by Group Health Medical Insurance, Paid for by Boeing (a SPEEA negotiated benefit)

Cynthia,

You wrote in your e-mail to us of 11 January 2007, "I don't know what else we can do unless you get copies of the responses Group Health sent you." Please refrain from blaming the victim. It is not our responsibility. It is the responsibility of Group Health's contact, to whom you referred as the National Accounts Manager for Group Health, to retrieve the unopened letters, or copies of those letters, which he could have done by contacting the person(s) who wrote them. We already told you that we returned those letters unopened and unread to Group Health because we were disgusted with their response to us. In your e-mail to us dated 14 October 2006, you told us, "Therefore, the Boeing Benefits focal said if you still have the letters from Group Health and were willing to share them, he would like to read the letters to get a better sense of how Group Health has responded to the you." "That is the next step." "Please let me know if you are willing to share the letters." So, for your and the Boeing Benefits focal's convenience, we FAXed to you the only response we did read, which was the letter dated 30 June 2006 that we got from Group Health, and you acknowledged receipt of it in your e-mail to me of 19 October 2006. Also, in our e-mail to you of 18 October 2006, we gave you "full permission to read any and every letter that Group Health sent me." What you and your Boeing Benefits focal should have done was to tell the Group Health National Accounts Manager to do his job and retrieve those letters or get copies of those letters from the parties who wrote them.

Furthermore, it does not even matter what was in those letters because, at this point, it was up to the Group Health National Accounts Manager to respond to our grievance which you supposedly sent him. Also, in our e-mail to you of 18 October 2006, we explained our grievance, our problem with Group Health's response, and what we needed from Group Health to make us whole. Finally, we reiterated and summarized our four very simple needs from Group Health in our e-mail to you of 11 January 2007. So please spare us your nonsense! It is obvious that you are just using this as an excuse to do nothing. **We would have respected you if you would have just been honest with us and told us that you were not willing to help us, even though you claimed, in your article in the September 2006 edition of SPEEA SPOTLITE, that, as President of my union, "Then, there is the assistance provided by SPEEA in resolving problems that are not necessarily contractual violations, such as resolving medical insurance problems . . ."**

You stated in your e-mail to me of 11 January 2007 that "regarding the articles where Boeing said they would dialogue with SPEEA regarding medical concerns, this all refers to Regence." However, your article in the January 2007 issue of SPEEA SPOTLITE did not say that it was specific to Regence. What it does state is, "Boeing then announced that it will partner with labor unions and others to help drive changes in the health care system that will result in improved quality and cost effectiveness." Besides that, the article I sent to you from the Chicago Tribune dated 16 November 2006, and reprinted in the Boeing News Clips of the same date, states abundantly clearly that the Boeing Company is demanding more accountability of providers of medical care. (Forgive me for interpreting this newspaper article to mean that your Boeing Benefits focal was assigned the task of forcing medical providers and insurance companies, whom Boeing pays, to at least own up to their mistakes.)

You stated in your e-mail to me of 11 January 2007 that "your e-mails contain the only issue I have looked into in years regarding Group Health." So what?! First of all, you are the one who was willing to take my complaint via your e-mail to me of 14 October 2006. Secondly, you told me over the phone that one patient died and another lost her eye sight as a result of Group Health's negligence and incompetence. Thirdly, my wife's allergic reaction to steroids is no small matter. How dare you discount my wife's and other peoples' pain with your pathetic lame excuse. And even if it were true that we are the only one who had a complaint against Group Health in a long time, which is a line of bull crap that we have heard

before, so what?! You now have a complaint against Group Health and it was you who claimed per your article in the September 2006 edition of SPEEA SPOTLIGHT that, "Then, there is the assistance provided by SPEEA in resolving problems that are not necessarily contractual violations, such as resolving medical insurance problems . . ."

You stated in your e-mail of 11 January 2007 that "she is still a patient with rights to refuse certain drugs on any grounds". We already told you that! In our e-mail to you dated 18 October 2006, we told you that Elana did refuse to take steroids but Group Health gave them to her anyway by lying that they were not in the medication that they prescribed to her, and the label of the medication did not identify any of the ingredients as steroids. Therefore, Elana already exercised her patient's rights with Group Health to no avail. It is Group Health's violation of Elana's patient's rights **via their lie about the steroids** that should have concerned you. You also stated in your e-mail to me of 11 January 2007 "...get Elana's file updated with her **preferences**." Correction! It is not a preference. It would be obvious to any five-year-old that my wife had an allergic to steroids.

To your sentence, "I don't know what else to do here," in your e-mail to me of 11 January 2007, yes, you do know what to do: you are just NOT WILLING to do it. I will remember that at the next SPEEA election because I do not take kindly to paying union dues to you, who are only interested in aggrandizing yourself by spewing a bunch of empty promises while (a) endorsing a pathetic excuse for inaction from Boeing's Benefits focal, and (b) allowing Group Health, who is ripping off both the company and its employees, to sidestep our legitimate concerns with their bogus grievance process, to which we ALREADY expressed our complaint and requirements.

What I would like to do for the next step is to see SPEEA elect a Union President that goes to bat for its union members, instead of you who give a bunch of lip service. Thank you for wasting my time and your time, and Boeing's money.

We will not read any further correspondences, or listen to any more phone messages, or take any more phone calls from you.

Michael Laham
P-8 A Mission Systems
MMA Integration & Test –
Software Communications Test
Phone: 253 / 657-4136

From: Cole, Cynthia M
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2007 8:47 PM
To: Laham, Michael S
Cc: Cole, Cynthia M
Subject: RE: Mistreatment by Medical Insurance - Paid for by Boeing

Michael,

Forgive me, I thought I had provided you with the last response from Boeing Benefits regarding your claim against Group Health.

Group Health sent several letters to your home. You said you had opened one letter and returned the rest, unopened. There is nothing Boeing Benefits can do at this point because of the unopened letters Group Health sent to you. The Boeing Benefits focal I was working with said that since he doesn't know what those letters said, and because Group Health believes they made an adequate response to your concerns, this has left Boeing Benefits with no where to turn. I don't know what else we can do unless you can get copies of the responses Group Health sent to you.

Regarding the articles where Boeing said they would dialog with SPEEA regarding medical concerns, this all refers to Regence.

We have a lot of issues with Regence and rarely receive any input about problems with Group Health. Your emails contain the only issue I have looked into in years regarding Group Health.

I don't know what else to do here. Is there a patient advocate within the Group Health system who could mediate and get Elana's file updated with her preferences. Even though Group Health does not believe she is allergic to steroids, she is still a patient with rights to refuse certain drugs on any grounds.

What would you want to do for the next step?

Cynthia M. Cole

P-8A Poseidon Program, System Security Engineering
Information Assurance Lead
Ph: 425-965-7748 M/S: 6M-HL
SPEEA President
IFPTE Vice President

From: Laham, Michael S
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2007 8:40 AM
To: Cole, Cynthia M
Subject: RE: Mistreatment by Medical Insurance - Paid for by Boeing

8 January 2007

Cynthia Cole, President
Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA)
International Federation of Professional Technical Engineers (IFPTE) Local 2001, AFL-CIO, CLC
15205 52nd Ave South
Seattle, WA 98188

SUBJECT: Mistreatment by Group Health Medical Insurance, Paid for by Boeing (a SPEEA negotiated benefit)

Cynthia,

Some time ago, I wrote to you (see e-mail below, dated Monday, 2 October 2006 @ 10:46 AM) about mistreatment we received from Group Health. It has been some time since we last corresponded on this matter, and I was wondering what has happened with our grievance against Group Health. As explained in my wife's e-mail of 19 October 2006 (see below), what we need from Group Health are the following:

1. Re-imbursement for co-payments for five needless visits to Group Health clinics.
2. Re-imbursement for useless and harmful drugs.
3. Entry into Elana Laham's health file a statement that Elana Laham is allergic to steroids and therefore under no circumstances should she be given any steroids.
4. Copy of the above statement, showing and proving official entry into Group Health records.

We saw your article in the January 2007 (page 3) of SPEEA SPOTLITE, in which you discussed results of meeting with Boeing management in which "Boeing then announced that it will partner with labor unions and others to help drive changes in the health-care system that will result in improved quality and cost effectiveness. SPEEA leaders look forward to this dialogue." Obviously, the treatment we received from Group Health contained neither quality nor cost effectiveness. And apparently, Boeing and other companies are concerned about paying high medical insurance premiums for low quality care, as discussed in an article I saw on the Boeing News Clips on 16 November 2006. For your convenience, I attach a link and a text file copy of this article, "Backlash at bills for medical mistakes," from the Chicago Tribune, dated 16 November 2006:

<< File: Backlash at Bills for Medical Mistakes_Boeing News Clips - 1615262.htm >>

<< File: Backlash at Bills for Medical Mistakes_Boeing News Clips - 1615262.txt >>

I cite the Boeing News Clip and your article in SPEEA SPOTLITE because I believe that companies are moving toward using their "horsepower" against recalcitrant medical organizations such as Group Health that charge big premiums and deliver medical mistakes. We are interested to know what is happening with our grievance and appreciate an update on what is happening with it.

Michael Laham
P-8A Mission Systems

MMA Integration & Test –
(now at) Software Communications Test
Phone: 253 / 657-4136

From: Cole, Cynthia M
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2006 12:40 PM
To: Laham, Michael S
Subject: RE: Mistreatment by Medical Insurance - Paid for by Boeing

* I received your fax.

Cynthia M. Cole
MMA Program, System Security Engineering
Information Assurance Lead
Ph: 425-965-7218 M/S: 6M-HL
SPEEA President
IFPTE Vice President

From: Laham, Michael S
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 4:04 PM
To: Cole, Cynthia M
Subject: FW: Mistreatment by Medical Insurance - Paid for by Boeing

October 18, 2006

Boeing Benefits Focal,
C/O Cynthia M. Cole
MMA Program, System Security Engineering
Information Assurance Lead
Phone 425-965-7218 M/S 6M-HL
SPEEA President, IFPTE Vice President

TO: BOEING BENEFITS FOCAL

I, Elana Laham, wish to inform you of the unbelievable treatment Group Health gave to me, where the doctor that I saw turned a simple case of ring worm into a threat to my health. I told the doctor repeatedly not to prescribe to me any medication with steroids, but he gave me steroids anyway, and lied about it. I contracted a huge red rash on the skin of my right breast as a result of the steroids I was given against my will. ACCORDING TO THE ENGLISH DICTIONARY THE WORD "ALLERGIC" IS DEFINED AS "A REACTION TO A PREVIOUSLY ENCOUNTERED SUBSTANCE RESULTING IN SKIN RASH". See (Random House Webster's College Dictionary p. 35). In the subsequent visits to Group Health to resolve the rash, all of the doctors I saw gave me a misdiagnosis and/or no diagnosis. I believe they did this to cover up the fact that I am allergic to steroids. In addition, they all refused to put in my medical file that I am allergic to steroids!

Due to the above, we demanded a monetary reimbursement for all of the co-payments that I had to make for the five visits to Group Health. I will be happy to give you copies of my receipts for these disservices. We also demanded a refund for all of the useless and harmful drugs that were prescribed to me. I will be happy to furnish you copies of my receipts for these unwarranted medications. We had to pay a total of \$79.45 for the above. In addition, we demanded of Group Health to put into my health file the following statement: "I, ELANA LAHAM, AM ALLERGIC TO STEROIDS AND THEREFORE UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD BE GIVEN ANY STEROIDS." And I wanted a copy of the above statement having been put in my health file for my own records. I also told Group Health that if they honored my requests I would consider the matter completely resolved. In a letter from Group Health to me, dated 6/30/06, they refused to honor any of my requests. Instead, they made a pathetic attempt to dismiss my reaction to steroids as "neither being an allergic reaction or intolerance but a normal temporary effect of steroids". I DO NOT CALL SIX MONTHS AND COUNTING OF MY RIGHT BREAST STILL CLEARING UP THE STAIN THAT THE STEROIDS LEFT THERE "A NORMAL TEMPORARY EFFECT"!!! WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE STAIN THAT IS STILL THERE? Moreover, they made a pathetic attempt to defend their incompetent, unprofessional, rude, unethical doctors. Furthermore, the same letter makes untrue statements such as that I had additional rashes under both breasts! I only had one rash the entire time and that one was on my right breast. IF THE GROPE HEALTH MANAGER WAS REALLY CONCERNED AND SADDENED THAT WE

ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH GROPE HEALTH'S RESPONSES AND SUBSTANDARD CARE, THEN HE WOULD HONOR ALL OF OUR REQUESTS AND APOLOGIZE TO US FOR GROPE HEALTH'S FAILURE TO HONOR THEIR HIPPOCRATIC OATH!

As far as your request goes, I am happy to oblige you. I give you my full permission to read any and every letter that Group Health sent me. (Unfortunately I only have the letter of 6/30/06. Please give me a FAX number where I can FAX you a copy of this letter of 6/30/06, as I do not have a soft copy of it. The rest of the letters, I returned to sender unopened and unread, out of disgust with Group Health's response to my complaint. However, I give you my full permission to retrieve them from Group Health and for you to read them.

Sincerely,

Elana Laham

From: Cole, Cynthia M
Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2006 2:47 PM
To: Laham, Michael S
Cc: Cole, Cynthia M
Subject: RE: Mistreatment by Medical Insurance - Paid for by Boeing

Michael,

Boeing Benefits contacted the National Accounts Manager for Group Health with your concerns. They looked into your wife's case and he said they are always concerned when patients feel they did not receive care that met their expectations.

The Group Health manager said there had been a review by medical experts and that an extensive letter summarizing the results of the review was sent to your wife on June 30. A second letter in response to a second request for review was sent to her on August 2. He said all of your wife's concerns were addressed in the letters, and he said he was saddened that the two of you were not satisfied with the responses.

Therefore, the Boeing Benefits focal said if you still have the letters from Group Health and were willing to share them, he would like to read the letters to get a better sense of how Group Health has responded to the you.

That is the next step. If he finds the letters did not appropriately address your concerns, then they will have something to go back to Group Health about. The Boeing Benefits focal was not convinced yet that Group Health did all that they could do.

Please let me know if you are willing to share the letters.

Cynthia M. Cole
MMA Program, System Security Engineering
Information Assurance Lead
Ph: 425-965-7218 M/S: 6M-HL
SPEEA President
IFPTE Vice President

From: Laham, Michael S
Sent: Monday, October 02, 2006 10:46 AM
To: Cole, Cynthia M
Cc: Todd, Gordon L
Subject: Mistreatment by Medical Insurance - Paid for by Boeing

2 October 2006

Cynthia Cole, President
Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA)
International Federation of Professional Technical Engineers (IFPTE) Local 2001, AFL-CIO, CLC
15205 52nd Ave South

SUBJECT: Mistreatment by Medical Insurance, Paid for by Boeing (a SPEEA negotiated benefit)

Cynthia,

Hello. My name is Michael Laham, and I work for the P-8A Multi-Mission Maritime Aircraft (MMA) Mission Systems segment, and in particular in the MMA Integration & Test – System Test Team. I write as a follow-up to your article in the September 2006 edition of SPEEA SPOTLITE, in which you mentioned about "the assistance provided by SPEEA in resolving problems that are not necessarily contractual violations, such as resolving medical insurance problems . . . " After showing this article to Gordon Todd, my local area representative, Mr. Todd suggested that I write to you about a big problem that my wife and I had with Group Health Cooperative.

According to the Health Plan Comparison Chart posted on the Boeing Total Access system during the Open Enrollment period, Boeing pays \$9,199.92 per year of premium to Group Health Cooperative for health care for me and my wife. I therefore thought that Boeing has some leverage with Group Health to resolve this problem, so I posted a summary of the problem on 14 June 2006 as Request #2675037 in the Boeing Total Access system. For your convenience, I reproduce the three paragraphs of my posting:

"I write to inform Boeing of the unbelievable treatment Group Health gave my wife, where doctors turned a simple case of ringworm into a threat to her health. My wife told the doctor repeatedly not to prescribe medicine with steroids, but he gave her steroids anyway and lied about it. Result was a huge red rash on my wife's skin. In four subsequent visits to Group Health to resolve the rash, each doctor we saw refused to put in my wife's medical record that she is allergic to steroids. The dermatologist told us that some of the rash was due to the steroids but sold us medications for eczema/dermatitis, so we did not use them.

"Is this how Group Health wastes Boeing's health premium dollars? Can someone use Boeing's clout as premium payer to make Group Health refund us for co-payments for worthless doctor visits and useless/harmful drugs?

"We can furnish our detailed complaint and artifacts to the Boeing person handling this complaint, upon his/her written request."

The above posting was deliberately brief because the Boeing Total Access system limits a request text to 1,000 characters. My wife wrote up the complete story of our problem with Group Health Cooperative in our letter of complaint that we sent to their customer service department on 25 May 2006, a copy of which I attach to this e-mail below:

<< File: Letter_Group Health_052506.doc >>

To make a long story short, we never got a meaningful resolution to our problem with Group Health – all we ever got from Group Health was a "bed bug" letter that pretended to investigate our complaint and either denied any wrong-doing by Group Health personnel or made excuses for their behavior. Group Health caused my wife to have an allergic reaction to steroids because they refused to honor my wife's request not to use steroids, and then they refused to put in her health file that she is allergic to steroids. And no one at Boeing Total Access ever gave us any meaningful resolution to this problem: we never got any meaningful resolution to the Total Access posting or to my follow-up e-mail to a Ms. Josephine Rainwater on Friday, 17 July 2006 (see e-mail below this one) on this matter. In May of 2006, during the Open Enrollment, we left Group Health.

Cynthia, the reason why I write to you now about this incident is to find out what, if anything, SPEEA can do to give a SPEEA member some "horsepower" or clout with a recalcitrant insurance company that deliberately messes up a simple case into multiple visits and makes the patient – a SPEEA member – pay for worthless doctor visits and useless/harmful drugs.

1. Does SPEEA keep tabs on such detestable incidents for use as a bargaining point during contract negotiations with Boeing?
2. Does SPEEA have a mechanism to get Boeing to withhold payments to an insurance company for mistreatment by its corresponding provider(s)?

Cynthia, I hope that SPEEA does have some "horsepower", or at least can get Boeing to use its "horsepower" against Group Health Cooperative. After the non-reply by Boeing Total Access and the "bed bug" letter from Group Health, we

believe that the only hope in preventing future problems with a recalcitrant insurance company is to make it suffer financial consequences or public embarrassment.

Michael Laham
P-8A Mission Systems
MMA Integration & Test – System Test
Phone: 253 / 657-4136

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From: Laham, Michael S
Sent: Friday, July 07, 2006 8:06 AM
To: EXT-Rainwater, Josephine
Cc: Bodhaine, Debra J
Subject: Boeing Total Access Request #2675037 Response

Ms. Rainwater:

Hello. My name is Michael Laham, and I work in the Multi-Mission Maritime Aircraft (MMA) Integration & Test – System Test group. I send you this e-mail in response to your posting of an answer to my Boeing Total Access Request # 2675037, which I posted on 14 June 2006, text of which I reproduce below for your convenience (three paragraphs following):

"I write to inform Boeing of the unbelievable treatment Group Health gave my wife, where doctors turned a simple case of ringworm into a threat to her health. My wife told the doctor repeatedly not to prescribe medicine with steroids, but he gave her steroids anyway and lied about it. Result was a huge red rash on my wife's skin. In four subsequent visits to Group Health to resolve the rash, each doctor we saw refused to put in my wife's medical record that she is allergic to steroids. The dermatologist told us that some of the rash was due to the steroids but sold us medications for eczema/dermatitis, so we did not use them.

"Is this how Group Health wastes Boeing's health premium dollars? Can someone use Boeing's clout as premium payer to make Group Health refund us for co-payments for worthless doctor visits and useless/harmful drugs?

"We can furnish our detailed complaint and artifacts to the Boeing person handling this complaint, upon his/her written request."

The above posting was deliberately brief because the Boeing Total Access system limits a request text to 1,000 characters. The complete information you would need to help us resolve our problem with Group Health Cooperative is given in our letter of complaint that we sent to their customer service department on 25 May 2006, a copy of which I attach to this e-mail below:

<< Letter_GroupHealth_052506.doc (33 KB) >>

We saw your response posted on the Boeing Total Access on 3 July 2006, for Request #2675037, which I reproduce below for your convenience:

"I have referred this matter to the appropriate Boeing and Group Health HMO personnel for assistance with your concerns. I will contact you directly after receiving a response. If you would prefer to contact me directly, I am Josephine Rainwater with Boeing Health and Insurance. My direct telephone number is 206-544-1193."

We (i.e., my wife and I) do not understand why this response is marked as "Resolved." To date, we have not received any response, either from Boeing Total Access or from Group Health, that gives a meaningful and satisfying resolution to this problem that Group Health's doctors created by giving my wife steroids after my wife specifically and repeatedly told their doctor not to prescribe steroids, and when a simple anti-fungal cream was all the medicine she needed for her ring worm. Also, we need a meaningful and satisfying response to (a) the refusal of Group Health doctors to enter in my wife's medical records that she is allergic to steroids, (b) reimbursement for co-payments for visits to resolve the rash that these steroids created and for worthless medicines sold to us on prescription of Group Health doctors, and (c) incredibly rude treatment Group Health doctors gave to my wife. We therefore do not consider this problem at all resolved unless and until either Boeing Total Access or Group Health addresses all of our concerns in a meaningful way.

We await your response, and we hope that furnishing a copy of our letter of complaint of 25 May 2006 to Group Health gives you the full picture of what Group Health did to my wife. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information on this matter.

Michael Laham
BEMS ID #331157
MMA Integration & Test –
System Test
Phone: 253 / 657-4136