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**Organization:** Health Care for All Oregon and AFSCME Retirees Chapter 75

**Topic:** Healthcare Cost Containment

**Will oral comments be provided as well:** N

Lou's Emergency Story

July 13, 2024 while dining with family outside of Springfield Oregon, I suffered an esophagus blockage. This event does not cause choking but the person cannot swallow. It causes saliva to build up and is quite uncomfortable with constant spitting.

My family took me to McKenzie-Willamette Emergency rated as a level 3 trauma center. We arrived about 9pm. Within 30 minutes I was called in and X-rays were taken. 4 hours later I was triaged and was told that they did not have a gastrologist on call that could take care of me. The nurse proceeded to inform me that Peace Health River Bend was to full and could not take me. She then said that an ambulance would transport me to Peace Health Vancouver Washington. Being quite uncomfortable and by then after 2am I only thought to ask, "would they bring me back" and was assured they would.

They loaded me up in a Mid Valley Ambulance Service and drove me over 132 miles to Vancouver Washington, Peace Health Hospital. There I was taken care of and treated very well by all the providers. I was released that Sunday the 15th. However, I had no way home, in Elmira. Apparently the Mid Valley Ambulance Service could not pick me up and return me as promised. My daughter drove up and returned me home.

Later, I wondered why did the ambulance pass several hospitals on the way, and who was this ambulance company. A level 3 trauma center does not have to have all emergency services but "Has developed transfer agreements for patients requiring more comprehensive care at a Level I or Level II Trauma Center. See <https://www.amtrauma.org/page/traumalevels>

Apparently Mid Valley Ambulance Service has a contract with Peace Health wherever they are. Also with a little investigation I found that this ambulance service is owned by a Danish Investment Company.

Also, now I have doubts that River Bend was "to full"...

In summary, it was disappointing and completely unknowable at the time to find that McKenzie-Willamette does not cover gastronomical emergencies. The ambulance contract interfered with more immediate care. And it is disturbingly suspicious that the ambulance was for profit and owned as an investment. However, It had been approved by the Eugene-Springfield Fire Department. I do not believe that when the Oregon Health Authority endeavors to figure out cost for containment purposes it pencils in these unnecessary costs and disruptions as stated above.

This is just one small example of costs, questionable service, inefficiency, and administrative overhead created by the market place mentality in our current healthcare system.

Thank you.

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