

Women To Women Health Care
A Gynecology Practice
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July 11, 2018

The Honorable Josh Hawley
Attorney General of the State of Missouri
Consumer Protection Unit
P.O. Box 899
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Dear Mr. Hawley,

We are writing you with hope that you can redress a situation that involves the incompetent and egregious billing practices of Pathology, Inc.

On 6/1/2012, we contracted with Pathology, Inc., a clinical laboratory, to provide all patient lab services to patients of our gynecology practice. Under that contract, Path, Inc. agreed to provide all requested lab services for our patients. We neither paid them, nor were paid by them. Instead, they assumed all responsibility for providing services as ordered and for billing and collecting all lab fees from patients and their insurers.

In early 2016, Lab Corp acquired Pathology, Inc. We understand that, at the time of the acquisition, Path Inc.'s accounts receivables were turned over to a collection agency, ICQ Search & Recovery. This included charges just billed, charges waiting for insurance to pay, charges waiting for the patient to pay, charges that NEVER were billed to insurance or patients, and charges that already had been paid but for which payment had not been posted.

We have been contacted by numerous patients that they have received past due notices on charges that never were submitted to their insurances. The majority of these lab tests were preventative testing performed during Well Woman Exams, hence they are covered under patients' preventative medicine benefits. We understand that these claims were never submitted to insurance. Now, because the charges are well past the date to submit to the insurance, the patients have been identified as the responsible party. Some of the dates of service are at least 3 years old.

We now have been made aware that ICQ Search & Recovery has initiated harassing phone calls to our patients, threatening to come to their home and/or work and to take them to court over contested payments of as little as \$50!

We have made multiple attempts to negotiate with ICQ Search & Rescue and the former CEO of Pathology, Inc. The collection agency is reluctant to discuss the situation with us, citing HIPPA privacy protections. When pushed that we were the ordering physicians, they relented that they have no access to the original billing records; the accounts they have are all considered past due. The CEO of the now-defunct Pathology, Inc. refused to recognize that their shoddy billing practices do not allow a collection agency to profit 3 years after the date of service for amounts that would have been paid by insurance companies had Path Inc. done its job. Both the CEO and debt company refused to distinguish between a truly bad debt and their own incompetent billing and bookkeeping practices.

Because of privacy concerns, we are unable to cite specific cases, but we are encouraging our patients to contact your office directly to investigate this unethical and abusive, if not outright illegal collection. We hope you can help us remedy this disreputable situation.
Respectfully,

Cathleen R. Faris, M.D.

Michelle R. de Vera, M.D.

Kathleen M. Hogan, M.D.