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August 28, 2017

Ms. Amy Paynter  
President, Board of Commissioners  
Columbia Basin Hospital  
200 Nat. Washington Way  
Ephrata, WA 98823

Dear Ms. Paynter:

We write today to express serious concerns about Columbia Basin Hospital's (CBH) legal responsibility to ensure that community members and patients have meaningful and legal access to pertinent information regarding hospital services and Charity Care.

Columbia Legal Services, a non-profit public interest law firm, has examined hospital Charity Care policies throughout Washington State and is engaging in an effort to contact hospitals to correct legal deficiencies within their policies.

In CBH's case, the hospital's policy states that accounts previously assigned to collections which have received a judgment are no longer eligible for Charity Care. We believe this runs contrary to WAC 246-453-020 which states that hospitals shall make Charity Care designations "at any time." Creating such a deadline prevents persons in greatest need from obtaining the Charity Care they were fully eligible to receive on the date of admission because most likely they were not properly screened.

We urge you to immediately review your policies and practices and take all steps to remedy this deficiency without delay. Systemic denial of coverage could constitute a deceptive act in violation of the Washington Consumer Protection Act.

Please respond within 30 days regarding this issue and describe steps that will be taken to ensure that community members and patients will receive equal access to Charity Care and other services.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Ty Duhamel", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

D. Ty Duhamel, Attorney  
Tony Gonzalez, Attorney



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**Kennewick**  
7103 W Clearwater Ave, Ste C  
Kennewick, WA 99336  
(888) 201-9735

**Olympia**  
711 Capitol Way S, Suite 304  
Olympia, WA 98501  
(800) 260-6260

**Seattle**  
101 Yesler Way, Suite 300  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(800) 542-0794

**Wenatchee**  
300 Okanogan Ave, Suite 2A  
Wenatchee, WA 98801  
(800) 572-9615

**Yakima**  
600 Larson Building  
6 South Second Street  
Yakima, WA 98901  
(800) 631-1323