

July 16, 2021

Submitted by Louis Tumminia, DO, President of the Medical Staff of Delray Medical Center

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Dear Editor:

As members of the Medical Executive Committee of Delray Medical Center, we represent multiple complex specialties and have countless years of experience providing healthcare to the citizens of Delray Beach and surrounding communities. We remain committed to our patients and their well-being. We pride ourselves on our mission of enhancing the services provided to the patients of Delray and the surrounding area.

It is because of this responsibility to our patients that we felt compelled to voice our concerns about the proposed PSN/Legent Spine and Orthopedic Institute and the implications it will have on the community.

Delray Medical Center is a full service community hospital, comprehensive stroke center and level 1 trauma center that provides a comprehensive range of healthcare services to all patients, regardless of their ability to pay or their age. Delray Medical Center has been committed to quality for nearly 40 years. Most recently, Delray earned the 2021 Health Grades Patient Safety Award for the fourth year in a row. PSN/Legent was fined last year by CMS for unacceptable levels of infections, blood clots and falls-related injuries at the Legent Orthopedic and Spine hospital in San Antonio.

We feel confident in sending our patients to Delray and caring for the thousands of patients who use Delray's emergency department because we know the quality of the institution and the full breadth of services, specialists and technology available to our patients should **any** complications arise. The recent pandemic highlighted how important this was when Delray enabled us to safely care for COVID-19 patients as well as those requiring other medical care.

The PSN/Legent hospital will have a small emergency department, but not be a full service hospital. Will they have the capability of providing lifesaving or stabilizing care? Emergency care can mean nearest facility, so how will this work with Legent's position that EMS will "know" where to take patients? Will patients then be transported to another hospital, potentially delaying life-saving care and causing irreparable damage?

The PSN/Legent Hospital presents a grave concern to patient safety and access to comprehensive medical care. A common complication when performing orthopedic and spine surgeries is a pulmonary embolism (PE). When this occurs, time is of the essence. Treating a PE requires a team of experts and specialists – including trained and experienced vascular surgeons - and equipment available ONLY at a full service hospital.

The PSN/Legent hospital model will not provide surgical care to patients with Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Tricare or Medicaid. They will only provide surgical care to patients with private or commercial health insurance who will generate high levels of income for the physician investors. Our community hospitals offer care to everyone who walks in the door. This amounts to cherry-picking which patients are provided access to care.

The PSN/Legent model, by excluding all Medicare, Tricare and Medicaid consumers, disrupts a fragile balance and weakens our entire healthcare system. Are physicians really being asked to choose which of their patients should be offered an opportunity to go to the hospital? Does it really help our community to have a hospital that excludes seniors, veterans and underserved patients?

Finally, we are concerned that this hospital will dilute – not enhance – the healthcare resources that are available throughout the County. Delray Medical Center as well as other community hospitals train and educate the nurses, doctors, and clinicians of the future. They give back to the community. They provide lectures, screenings, education and charity care. They are here when we need them.

So, we ask you to consider this - does this hospital benefit the community or the investors?

Respectfully,

The Medical Executive Committee, Delray Medical Center

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