



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH DUDEK
SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 1, 2015

Contact: AHCA Communications Office
AHCACommunications@ahca.myflorida.com
(850) 412-3623

Commission on Healthcare and Hospital Funding Hears from Floridian Who Feels She Has Been Price Gouged

~ Discusses Healthcare Quality and Price Transparency ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, the Commission on Healthcare and Hospital Funding heard from a Floridian who feels she has been price gouged and discussed healthcare quality and price transparency at Florida hospitals during a meeting in Tallahassee. The Commission continued its discussion of patients at Florida hospitals who have experienced inflated hospital bills and Governor Scott's call for increased transparency for hospitals and healthcare providers during the upcoming 2016 legislative session.

Lindsay Barrack, a Floridian who feels she has been price gouged, gave an account of her experience at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital. Lindsay broke her finger and went to the hospital for surgery. Lindsay said that she requested to know the price for the operating room up front, but did not get a response. After the surgery, she received a bill for almost \$18,000 with no itemization of charges and a deadline of four days to make the payment.

Lindsay Barrack said, "I am self-employed. I work very hard for everything that I do and everything that I receive... I was in the hospital for a total of three hours. I was charged for way more than a total of three hours. I had to be anaesthetized longer, I had to use the room longer, because they had to wait for the proper hardware to be delivered down to the operating room...I'm obviously not saying I don't think I should be charged, but I clearly think I shouldn't be charged \$18,000...and that's not including the anesthesiologist, that's not including the radiologist and that's not including the surgeon."

Dr. Brent James, Chief Quality Officer and Vice President of Medical Research at Intermountain Healthcare, opened the meeting with a discussion on health care price transparency and quality analysis. Intermountain Healthcare is a Utah-based, not-for-profit system of 22 hospitals and over 1,400 physicians. Dr. James spoke to the Commission about Intermountain's dedication to improving quality outcomes and increasing efficiency in their healthcare delivery model.

Mr. Avik Roy, a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, also joined the Commission discussing hospital consolidation and its effects on the cost of health care. The Manhattan Institute is comprised of industry experts who develop policy reforms in finance, education, energy, healthcare and other economic sectors.

In the afternoon, the Agency for Health Care Administration provided an update on topics that were raised at the Commission's previous meeting. First, members of the Commission were briefed on current direct primary care laws in other states. The Commission asked for more information after a previous speaker, Dr. Lee Gross, shared that direct physician-patient interaction helps to improve quality of care. Next, commissioners were given an overview of



upcoming legislation that would include bills related to price transparency, the certificate of need program, and recovery care centers.

The meeting concluded with an open discussion about the presented information as well as next steps for the Commission as it heads into the new year.

Elizabeth Dudek, Secretary for the Agency for Health Care Administration and Co-Executive Director for the Commission, said, “The presentations we heard from Dr. James and Mr. Roy will help our work as the Commission continues to look at healthcare costs and quality in Florida. We look forward to researching and pursuing options for better health outcomes and more affordable healthcare for Florida families. The information shared today will be an important part of our work moving forward.”

State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong said, “I’d like to thank today’s presenters for sharing their national perspectives on the importance of health care quality as a driver for access and efficiency. Price and outcome transparency help patients make informed decisions for their own care.”

A recording of this meeting will be made available at thefloridachannel.org/videos/. The Commission will continue to seek out greater transparency around the way that taxpayer dollars are used to improve transparency and support better health outcomes moving forward. For more information about the Commission on Healthcare and Hospital Funding, please visit www.healthandhospitalcommission.com.

#

The Commission on Healthcare and Hospital Funding was formed by Governor Rick Scott to investigate the role of taxpayer funding for hospitals, insurers, and healthcare providers in Florida. The Commission is comprised of nine members and two Co-Executive Directors. For more information about the Commission and its activities, please visit <http://www.healthandhospitalcommission.com>.