

September 29, 2014

To: House Health Policy Committee, State of Michigan

From: Therese Dharwadkar

RE: HB5839; HB5840; HB5841; HB5842

Rose Colombo, my Mother was a patient of Dr. Farid Fata, for the period of time from September 2011 to July 2012. Her primary care doctor referred her to Fata to receive treatment for her anemia. In the span of seven months she received 31 Infed treatments for her anemia. I learned later from her current oncologist that these treatments were administered by Dr. Fata's staff incorrectly. Rose was becoming sicker under Fata's care. She suffered greatly through this period of time. I questioned Dr. Fata many times as to why Rose was becoming sicker and why he could not find a source for her anemia. Fata said Rose would be on maintenance Infed treatments for life. My Mother was experiencing all the classical symptoms of cancer per my research: fever, extreme fatigue, pain in the hip and leg, weight loss. I feared my Mother was dying and insisted that Rose's primary care doctor order a CT scan; because through my personal research I was convinced my Mother had cancer. The CT scan showed a large cancerous mass.

After her diagnosis, her primary care doctor was adamant that we return to doctor Fata for a consult. On the day of the consult with Fata, he recommended palliative chemotherapy without ordering a PET scan to see if the cancer had spread. Fata felt a PET scan was not necessary for her treatment. Fata said we could start chemotherapy that day (before she received a port) and that a "lite dose of chemo" directly into her arm would be fine, when we declined he then wanted to give her an Infed treatment to "pink her up", which we also declined. He did not adequately explore other options available with us. Fata had written off her life and was planning on filling his chemo chair. No mention was given to Rose about seeing a radiation oncologist or a surgeon to further explore her options. Rose Colombo's treatment was below the minimal standard of care that would be expected of a hematologist oncologist.

Fata received \$4,653.23 from Rose Colombo's insurance and her out-of-pocket during that period of time. That is what the dollar value of Rose Colombo's life was worth to Fata! When Fata was arrested a copy of Rose's chart was obtained from the FBI. The chart had multiple errors and omissions. There was no communication between Fata and Rose's primary care doctor. A few days after Rose Colombo's last visit to Fata, we went to another oncologist. My Mother received appropriate treatment for her cancer and is ALIVE and well! Life is a blessing!

I will forever be thankful to the doctor that took a stand and reported Fata to the FBI. Other licensed health care professionals that he dealt with on a daily basis must have known something was wrong with the way Fata was practicing medicine. It is my opinion that no real change will happen unless health care professionals stop turning a blind eye to their colleagues' unconscionable acts. Insurance companies need to be more diligent to make sure their subscribers are receiving the correct treatment for their diagnosis. The entire complaint system needs to be looked at and improved. I had filed an allegation with the state of Michigan in November of 2012, which was still open and under investigation when Fata was arrested in Aug. 2013. The entire process when you file an allegation takes about a year. If Fata was seeing 30 patients a day for that one year and there are 250 working days a year that is 7,500 appointments/opportunities to victimize his patients! Fata was in practice for a long time in Michigan and he did not just wake up one morning and decide to misdiagnose people and commit fraud to the insurance carriers. He started slowly and deliberately as his greed grew, no amount of money was enough for him.

For the sake of all the Rose Colombo's out there please pass HB5839, HB5840, HB5841 and HB5842 and propose any other laws that will protect vulnerable people from bad doctors.

Thank you,

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