October 14, 2021

Dermatology Associates

ATT: Dr. Sands

3812 Pheasant Lane

Waterloo, IA 50701

Dear Dr. Sands,

It is with deep regret I am writing to transfer Janelle and Todd Onnen’s records to Dermatology Premier. Please refer to the attached Authorization for Release of Confidential Health Information.

We have enjoyed our appointments with Angela for over a decade as she did her absolute best to keep us healthy after both of us were diagnosed with Melanoma in 2011. As you can imagine we became more than just patients as we moved through our every 3-month and then every 6-month visits for the past 10 years. So, it is important for you to understand what has led to our decision to leave your practice.

During a routine call to remind me of my biopsy appointment the topic of mandatory masks came up. I asked what the policy was for a medical exception to the mask mandate. The receptionist transferred me to Linda. Linda asked what my medical condition(s) was, so I explained to her the three medical conditions that prevent me from remaining healthy while wearing a mask. I also told Linda that I have a Dr. that has supported my medical reasons. She did not ask if I would bring a copy of my medical exception from this Dr. She indicated she would check with the provider and call me back.

A short time later she called and stated that it was her and the office managers discretion to accept exceptions and they were declining my request. I asked if I could sit in my car until my appointment and then discuss with Angela as to her comfort level with my mask wearing during my biopsy. She became agitated and said, “it is not up to Angela it is up to me, and the office manager and we said NO”. She asked if I was vaccinated, and my reply was “no, I have had COVID does that count?”. She said it doesn’t because studies show that the immunity is not as strong as it is with the vaccine even though she admitted that those that are vaccinated are also catching COVID. I stated there are also studies that show the opposite as being true.

She kept reminding me that these policies are created to protect the health of **ALL** your patients. My reply was that the policies are **NOT** protecting **ALL** the patients because I just shared with her the medical reasons why the mask is not healthy for **THIS PATIENT**!

After several minutes exchanging our differing thoughts about masks, COVID, vaccines, etc. she suggested if I am not happy with this decision, she would be happy to transfer my records to another practice. I told her I would comply because she has me between a rock and a hard place. I have suffered from cancer 2X, and Angela identified another mole that needs a biopsy. I need to comply, even though it is not good for **THIS PATIENTS** health, but I will comply and decide whether I will transfer my records after the appointment.

After the call I told my husband what transpired. He said we should never return to your clinic. When I spoke with Linda to request the paperwork to transfer our records, she stated that unfortunately a lot of patients are not seeing eye to eye with the policies of health care providers. My reply was that I implore her to review the policy and take **ALL** your patients into consideration. It does not have to be this way and clinics like yours are making things worse and not **ALL** health care providers have this strict policy.

Since this is what is happening in your clinic, you may be losing patients. And if you aren’t, I can assure you some are not happy even though they are complying.

A couple of thoughts before I close.

* I have **NEVER** worn a mask to an appointment (even in your clinic in the past). I told Linda there are a lot of clinics that accept medical exceptions.
* Please train your staff about HIPPA regulations when asking about private medical information. Linda is not a nurse, nor should she be privy to personal medical information including immunization history. She and the office manager are not medical professionals so they should not be deciding whether an emergency use authorized treatment is right for your patients.
* I am attaching a couple pieces of information about why masks are harmful to **ALL** your patients and implore you to adjust your policies. There have been hundreds of studies on masks over several decades. In fact, after reviewing all the studies worldwide the CDC found “no reduction in viral transmission with the use of face masks”. The fact that people with cancer are especially at risk to hypoxia by wearing a mask should be at the top of your list of concerns for **ALL** your patients.

God Bless!

Janelle and Todd Onnen

Attachments:

Facemask Study from Stanford University (2020)

Your Health Information Privacy Rights (Dermatology Associates HIPPA Privacy Information)

CC: Angela Buttjer