



We're here for You!

November 15, 2011

National Union of Healthcare Workers

RE: Statement of Concern

To Whom It May Concern:

CAMFT is dedicated to the advancement and understanding of the profession of marriage and family therapy as both an art and a science, to maintaining high standards of professional ethics and qualifications, and to expanding the recognition and utilization of the profession.

The purpose of this letter is to express our concern regarding the recent allegations made by Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs) that Kaiser Permanente is routinely violating Title 28 C.C.R. § 1300.67.2.2 (Timely Access to Care). The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists ("CAMFT") is an organization representing nearly 30,000 members throughout California and is dedicated to advancing the profession and upholding the qualifications of marriage and family therapists.

§ 1300.67.2.2 specifies that plans shall provide health care services in a timely manner appropriate for the nature of the enrollee's condition consistent with good professional practice. Moreover, non urgent appointments (and return appointments) with mental health care providers must be provided within ten business days of the request for appointment, unless the treating provider, consistent with professionally recognized standards of practice, has determined that a longer waiting time will not have a detrimental impact on the health of the enrollee.

LMFTs, and other health professionals, are making serious allegations that the policies of Kaiser Permanente are such that patient timely access to care is being violated and ignored. It has been alleged that patients frequently wait over a month for appointments and return appointments even though the clinicians feel that the extended and long wait times could have detrimental impacts on the patients. It has also been alleged that the initial appointments are merely "meet and greets" and no assessment occurs; and, that when the initial evaluation actually does occur, it is not in depth or complete. Moreover, it has been alleged that Kaiser Permanente falsifies patient scheduling in efforts to avoid citation by state regulators based on § 1300.67.2.2. If these allegations are true, CAMFT is very concerned about the patients on a consumer protection level and that patient care is being compromised.

CAMFT is supportive of the movement to have state regulators (who are responsible for the protection of consumer health care and the regulation of health care plans and insurers) review and assess the allegations set forth by the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW) to determine whether patient care is being disregarded. We thank you for bringing these concerns to our attention and are hopeful that these issues can be resolved in a fair and appropriate manner.

Sincerely,

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of Marriage and
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