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L.A. CITY ATTORNEY ROCKY DELGADILLO SECURES SETTLEMENT WITH COLLEGE HOSPITAL OVER DUMPING OF PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS ON SKID ROW

Establishes Groundbreaking Injunction Against Dumping of Psychiatric Patients

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo today announced that – in the wake of College Hospital’s dumping of as many as 150 psychiatric hospital patients on skid row over a two-year period – his office has secured a settlement agreement with the hospital that will establish a groundbreaking injunction prohibiting College Hospital’s Costa Mesa and Cerritos facilities from dumping psychiatric patients in and around skid row, new protocols for the discharge of homeless patients with mental disorders, and \$1.6 million in civil penalties and charitable contributions.

“In the City of Los Angeles, we will not stand idly by while society’s most vulnerable are dumped in the gutters of skid row,” said City Attorney Delgadillo. “Those who engage in this unconscionable practice will be held to account.”

The court order, when entered, establishes a groundbreaking, first-of-its-kind injunction that will prohibit College Hospital Costa Mesa and College Hospital Cerritos from transporting any homeless psychiatric patient discharged from their facilities to the streets or any shelter within an established “Patient Safety Zone” as designated by the Pasadena (110) Freeway and the Los Angeles River to the north; the Harbor Freeway (110) to the west; by the Los Angeles River to the east; and by Florence Avenue to the south.

The settlement also requires College Hospital to work with the City Attorney’s Office and other stakeholders to create, adopt and implement written discharge planning policies and processes within one year to ensure the appropriate post-discharge arrangements for psychiatric patients. College Hospital will be required to secure knowing and voluntary consent before transporting a patient as well as utilize all available public and private resources to ensure a continuation of care.

In connection with the settlement, College Hospital has agreed to pay \$1,200,000 in charitable contributions to a number of organizations that care for the mentally ill and the homeless, including Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services, Men Chabad Residential Treatment Center, Lamp Community, the Midnight Mission, New Image Emergency Shelter, and the Union Rescue Mission. College Hospital will also pay \$400,000 in civil penalties to the County and City of Los Angeles. The penalties and charitable contributions that College Hospital is required to pay under the settlement are the largest – to date – of any hospital whose discharge practices have been investigated by the City Attorney’s Office.

“I want to thank the City Attorney for spearheading the effort to end the deplorable practice of patient dumping,” said Councilmember José Huizar. “To think that medical institutions that are charged with caring for this extremely vulnerable population would then turn around and dump them in the streets is despicable. Today the City is saying think twice before you do it again.”

This settlement comes as a result of the City Attorney’s Office’s investigation into College Hospital’s psychiatric patient discharge practices. The investigation – which dates back to April of 2008 – began when Steven Davis, a patient diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and schizoaffective disorder was transported from a care facility to College Hospital in Costa Mesa for evaluation following a suicide attempt. The hospital evaluated Mr. Davis and determined that he was suffering from paranoid delusions, hearing voices, and manifesting aggressive behavior.

After being informed that Mr. Davis would not be allowed to return to the original care facility, College Hospital was unable to locate another facility willing to accept him and did not make an attempt to contact his family. College Hospital first dumped Mr. Davis at the Union Rescue Mission (URM), without notifying or obtaining authorization from the facility. The next day, URM contacted College Hospital and requested Mr. Davis be retrieved, as URM is not equipped to treat a psychiatric patient.

A College Hospital van picked up Mr. Davis and transported him to the vicinity of the New Image Shelter – dumping him a second time. Instead of checking into the facility, Mr. Davis wandered the streets before finally walking into to a downtown clinic – run by the Southern California Medical Group. The clinic called the Los Angeles Fire Department – whose paramedics examined Mr. Davis and transported him to the California Hospital Medical Center. California Hospital Medical Center located a board and care facility for Mr. Davis and discharged him to this facility after notifying his family of his whereabouts and involving them in the discharge planning process.

“As attorneys for our client, Steven Davis, Public Counsel, the ACLU of Southern California and Steven Archer of Robbins, Kaplan, Miller and Ciresi, LLP are very pleased that the individual claims of Mr. Davis against College Hospital have been amicably resolved,” said David Daniels, Directing Attorney of the Homelessness Prevention Law Project at Public Counsel. “In developing the protocols, we will be vigilant in ensuring that no psychiatric patient is discharged to an unfamiliar shelter with no meaningful connection to long term supportive services. The homeless psychiatric patient discharge protocols that College Hospital is required to develop under the settlement ensure homeless psychiatric patients will have the dignity and the continuum of care that everyone leaving a hospital deserves.”

The City’s Attorney’s Office’s investigation indicates that - in the two years prior to Mr. Davis’ dumping - College Hospital may have dumped as many as 150 psychiatric patients on skid row – in some cases rendering people who had homes homeless. In many, if not most, of those instances, College Hospital failed to provide notification and obtain authorization from the shelters prior to discharge, and typically did not escort the patients into the facilities.

To obtain a copy of the settlement, please visit: www.lacity.org/atty

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