

Life Denied: Nurses, Family of Sick Teen March on Health Insurance Company Tuesday

by PR-NewsWire

CYPRESS, Calif., March 24 /PRNewswire/ -- Registered nurses, friends and concerned community members will join the family of Nick Colombo marching on the corporate offices of health insurance giant PacifiCare in Orange County this Tuesday to protest the denial of a life-saving cancer treatment for the 17-year-old, the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee (CNA/NNOC) announces.

The family and the nurses are also urgently appealing to the public to call PacifiCare at 714-828-1821 and demand they provide the care Nick needs.

Supporters can deliver the same message to PacifiCare spokesman Tyler Mason at 714-226-3530

What: March on PacifiCare

When: Tuesday, March 25, 10:00 am

Where: PacifiCare Headquarters,
5701 Katella Ave, Cypress, 90630

"My brother Nick Colombo is just 17 years old, and he has suffered with a painful bone cancer for four years," said Ricky Colombo, Nick's 19-year old brother. "Our insurance company, PacifiCare, denied Nick radiation treatment available in Kansas City which can save his life. He has exhausted all other treatment options but nothing worked. This is our last effort and this procedure has worked before with people in Nick's situation. We are now standing up for Nick, and telling PacifiCare that what they are doing is wrong."

Nick's brother Ricky asked for assistance in the patient stories section of the Guaranteed Healthcare, a Web site maintained by CNA/NNOC to document the stories of real people harmed by the health insurance companies.

Read his full story here:

http://www.guaranteedhealthcare.org/your_story/save-my-brother-nick-pacificare

"PacifiCare and the State's refusal of Nick's cancer treatments -- overruling the urgent appeals of an array of doctors and nurses -- is indicative of the failures of the healthcare plans offered up in many states including California," said Geri Jenkins UCSD Medical Center RN and an elected member of the CNA/NNOC Council of Presidents.

The treatments were deemed medically necessary by Nick's doctors, but California's Managed Care oversight board recently sided with PacifiCare, a decision that Nick's caregivers, family and community have vowed to overturn.

PacifiCare was recently fined \$3.5 million by the state of California for systematic mishandling of at least 133,000 claims like Nick's. The company is facing up to \$1.3 billion in addition penalties, for illegally denying care, and a Department of Managed Health Care investigation found that the corporation wrongly denied claims in 30 percent of its HMO cases in 2006-7. In 2005, PacifiCare was taken over by the nation's largest health insurer, UnitedHealth, which is expected to grow its profits 13 percent in 2007-8, according to recent reports.

The diversion of care dollars from Nick Colombo to PacifiCare profits is direct evidence of the need for immediate and fundamental healthcare reform. Every person in this country deserves guaranteed healthcare, which can only be achieved by replacing wasteful private insurance with non-profit, universal, single-payer coverage, such as Medicare for All. U.S. Rep. John Conyers is the author of H.R. 676, the national bill for guaranteed healthcare, and the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee is a lead sponsor of the bill.

The California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee is America's largest RN union, representing 80,000 critical-care nurses from every state.

Source: California Nurses Association

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