

2019 5910
No. _____

Confidential Information Redacted
Texas Labor Code §§402.083 & 402.092

OFFICIAL ORDER
of the
TEXAS COMMISSIONER OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Date: MAR 20 2019

Subject Considered:

AMERICAN MEDICAL RESPONSE AMBULANCE SERVICE, INC.
P.O. Box 847343
Dallas, Texas 75284-7343

CONSENT ORDER
TDI-DWC ENFORCEMENT FILE NO. 17259

General remarks and official action taken:

The commissioner of workers' compensation (commissioner) considers whether disciplinary action should be taken against American Medical Response Ambulance Service, Inc. (AMR).

WAIVER

AMR acknowledges that the Texas Labor Code and other applicable laws provide certain rights. AMR waives all of these rights and any other applicable procedural rights in consideration of the entry of this consent order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The commissioner makes the following findings of fact:

1. AMR is a medical transportation company and health care provider operating within the Texas workers' compensation system.
2. AMR was not selected to be tiered in the 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, or 2017 Performance Based Oversight (PBO) assessments.

**IMPROPERLY PURSUING A PRIVATE CLAIM AGAINST
AN INJURED EMPLOYEE**

3. On [REDACTED] AMR sent a bill in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] to an injured employee for health care services it provided to the injured employee on [REDACTED] in connection with a workers' compensation injury.
4. The injured employee's workers' compensation insurance carrier (insurance carrier) sent letters on [REDACTED], and [REDACTED], informing AMR that the bill sent to the injured employee was for services related to a workers' compensation claim and that it should immediately cease billing the injured worker and instead bill the insurance carrier.

5. On [REDACTED], a debt collection agency sent a bill to the injured employee on behalf of AMR for health care services it provided to the injured employee on [REDACTED].
6. As of [REDACTED], no finding had been made determining that the injured employee had violated TEX. LAB. CODE § 408.022 in selecting a treating doctor, nor had there been a final adjudication that the claim was not compensable.
7. AMR retained and utilized a third-party vendor, Centrex Revenue Solutions, LLC, for billing and collection services during the relevant time period involving the injured employee.

ASSESSMENT OF SANCTION

8. Improperly billing an injured employee for health care services imposes an undue financial burden on the injured employee and circumvents the Texas workers' compensation system and the roles of its system participants.
9. In assessing the sanction for this case, the commissioner appropriately and fully considered the following factors set forth in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e):
 - the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the prohibited act;
 - the history and extent of previous administrative violations;
 - the demonstrated good faith of the violator, including actions taken to rectify the consequences of the prohibited act;
 - the penalty necessary to deter future violations;
 - whether the administrative violation has negative impact on the delivery of benefits to an injured employee;
 - the history of compliance with electronic data interchange requirements;
 - other matters that justice may require, including but not limited to:
 - PBO assessments;
 - the promptness and earnestness of actions to prevent future violations;
 - self-report of the violation;
 - the size of the company or practice;
 - the effect of a sanction on the availability of health care; and
 - evidence of heightened awareness of the legal duty to comply with the Texas Workers' Compensation Act and Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) rules; and
 - to the extent reasonable, the economic benefit resulting from the prohibited act.
10. In assessing the sanction for this case, DWC found the following factors set forth in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e) to be aggravating: the seriousness of the violation; the history and extent of previous administrative violations; and the penalty necessary to deter future violations.

11. In assessing the sanction for this case, DWC found the following factors set forth in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e) to be mitigating: the promptness and earnestness of actions to prevent future violations.
12. AMR acknowledges that it has communicated with DWC regarding the relevant statutes and rules violated; the facts establishing that the administrative violation occurred; and the appropriateness of the proposed sanction, including how DWC considered the factors under TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e).
13. AMR acknowledges that, in assessing the sanction, DWC considered the factors set forth in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e).

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The commissioner makes the following conclusions of law:

1. The commissioner has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 402.001, 402.00111, 402.00114, 402.00116, 402.00128, 414.002, 414.003, 415.002, and 415.021.
2. The commissioner has authority to informally dispose of this matter as set forth under TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.056, TEX. LAB. CODE § 402.00128(b)(7), and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(h).
3. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021, the commissioner may assess an administrative penalty against a person who commits an administrative violation.
4. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.003(5) and (6), a health care provider commits an administrative violation if it violates a DWC rule or fails to comply with a provision of the Texas Workers' Compensation Act.
5. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 413.042, a health care provider commits an administrative violation if it pursues a private claim against a workers' compensation claimant for all or part of the cost of a health care service provided to the injured employee by the provider unless the injury is finally adjudicated as not compensable or the employee violates TEX. LAB. CODE § 408.022 relating to the selection of a doctor.
6. AMR violated TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 413.042 and 415.003(5) and (6) when it improperly billed an injured employee for workers' compensation health care services provided.

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ORDER

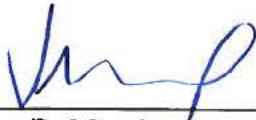
American Medical Response Ambulance Service, Inc. is ORDERED to pay an administrative penalty of \$7,500 within 30 days from the date of this Order.

The administrative penalty must be paid by company check, cashier's check, or money order made payable to the "State of Texas." Mail the administrative penalty to the Texas Department of Insurance, Attn: DWC Enforcement, MC 9999, P.O. Box 149104, Austin, Texas, 78714-9104.



Cassie Brown *WCTH*
Commissioner of Workers' Compensation

Approved as to Form and Content:



Van B. Moreland
Staff Attorney, DWC Enforcement
Texas Department of Insurance

