

Hospital chain sued for fraud

By JEAN PAGEL
Associated Press Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Officials of a psychiatric hospital chain are criticizing as counter-productive a lawsuit filed by two life insurance companies.

"We have always been willing to discuss any legitimate issues with the insurers in a constructive manner," officials of National Medical Enterprises Inc. said in a statement Monday.

"A lawsuit is no substitute for such a dialogue and does nothing to help the millions of Americans who need mental health care. We intend to contest this needless legal action vigorously."

Aetna and Metropolitan life insurance companies alleged in their lawsuit Monday in U.S. District Court in Dallas that NME illicitly recruited patients and billed for services that weren't performed.

It's the third time in a year that NME has been sued over its recruitment or billing practices.

NME, based in Santa Monica, Calif., is one of the nation's largest

health care service companies. In its statement, NME officials said Monday's lawsuit is "symptomatic of the larger national debate over the cost of health care."

Aetna spokesman John Hawkins said NME, through their recruitment and billing procedures, compromised the welfare of patients, "particularly in the psychiatric area, where people were subjected to medical treatment they didn't need ... it's outrageous."

Aetna and MetLife said they paid more than \$500 million to NME hospitals — including \$200 million to hospitals in Texas — over the past four years.

Hawkins said it is unclear how much was paid for services that were not provided, or that were provided but not needed.

Aetna and MetLife asked for compensation for their payments, and for punitive damages.

Monday's litigation comes two months after NME was sued by eight insurers who accused the company of submitting fraudulent claims for psychiatric health care.

That lawsuit contends NME

devised a national scheme to admit thousands of patients to its psychiatric hospitals with no regard to need. It involves hundreds of millions of dollars in claims.

The Texas attorney general's office sued the company a year ago on grounds it paid kickbacks for patient referrals and collected inflated payments from the Texas crime victims assistance fund.

In June, NME reached a settlement agreement with the attorney general's office, but admitted no wrongdoing.

The latest lawsuit alleges NME committed fraud under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

NME committed widespread fraud in obtaining and institutionalizing patients — at times using kickback schemes that involved physicians, public school guidance counselors and intervention and assessment services, the lawsuit alleges.

Hawkins said research by the insurance companies has shown NME's "coordinated effort to screen for patients to determine whether they had insurance coverage, then, if

they did have, to in a sense recruit them into the hospitals."

NME also kept patients hospitalized — regardless of medical need — until insurance coverage was exhausted, according to the lawsuit.

"They were determining the length of stay for the individual based on insurance coverage, and when benefits ran out the patients would be released and in many cases be declared 'miraculously' recovered," said Sarah Kelly, MetLife vice president for group claim operations.

Under its June settlement on the suit brought by Texas Attorney General Dan Morales, NME dropped claims of an estimated \$3.4 million to \$4.9 million on the state crime victims fund.

Also, safeguards were put into place that are designed to prevent people from being wrongfully admitted to the facilities. The settlement also established restrictions to reduce aggressive recruiting of patients, including removing referral representatives from public schools.

Investigations are ongoing in Texas into three other psychiatric chains.

Morales fights sludge dump

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas Attorney General Dan Morales continues to defend his opposition to a sludge dumping operation in West Texas.

On Monday, about 50 people from Sierra Blanca rallied at the Capitol, calling on Morales to stop trying to get the Texas Water Commission to reconsider a permit for the massive sludge operation.

MERCO Joint Venture has a six-year contract to dump sewage sludge from New York on arid rangeland about 90 miles southeast of El Paso.

H.A. "Speedy" Virdell of Sierra Blanca said the operation provides jobs to the area, while the process of spreading the sludge will replenish the land.

"We welcome MERCO into our community," Virdell said.

About 50 people aboard two buses took the nearly 500-mile trip to Austin for the rally. Referring to Gov. Ann Richards, they chanted, "We love Ann. Please stop Dan."

Tony Parada, a Hudspeth County rancher, said Morales was "messing with our livelihood, our jobs. I have seen nothing but positive results from the work on this project."

But Morales said he doubted the sludge would have a beneficial environmental impact. "If this New York City human feces is so great, I don't understand why they don't want to dump it in New York City."

He said Oklahoma-based MERCO had orchestrated the rally to defend its \$170 million contract with the city of New York.

Daryl & Nina Miller
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Campaign For Christ
At M.K. Brown Auditorium
Sept. 13-17 7:30 p.m.

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NOTICE OF COMPARABLE TAX RATES AND REVENUES

The legislature has enacted a statute on school funding to comply with a court mandate enforcing the state constitution. Under prior statutes, the tax rate for last year provides \$6,500 per student in state and local revenues. Under this statute, that same rate now provides \$6,801 per student in state and local revenues.

State law only requires a minimum tax rate of \$0.894 for county education districts. State law does not require a school district to adopt additional taxes. Neither does state law require a school district to adopt a tax rate that maximizes the receipt of state funds.

The board of trustees of the Miami School District hereby gives notice that it is considering the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.23 that will provide \$6,729 per student in state and local revenues.

This Notice is being published under protest by Miami I.S.D.

The Pampa News

Comic Page

The World Almanac® Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

- Waiting for
- Prickly shrub
- Whippers
- Pianist
- Garner
- Sign up
- One of the Barrymores
- Negative word
- Tag
- Classified
- Little bone
- Clears
- Tropical
- Midway attraction
- Cornelia
- Skinner
- Baseballer Willie
- Long skirt
- By the time
- Phoenix
- Starting from

DOWN

- Dancer
- Two words of dismay
- Gossip (sl.)
- Yoko
- Relates
- Kitchen appliance
- Spanish gold
- Author
- Jaffe
- Winter vehicle
- Additions to houses
- Cut
- Vote into office
- Life story
- Change into bone
- Fur-bearing animal
- Arrivederci
- How sweet
- Prank
- Villain in Othello
- Tints
- Ancient Italian family
- Attire
- to Joy
- Water holes
- Actress
- Moorehead
- Lizard
- Elevator direction
- Repetition
- Study
- School of modern art
- Fashion designer
- Christian
- Jog
- Frothy brew
- Mouth part

Answer to Previous Puzzle

IRIS	VOX	IRES
RAMP	ERA	RAGE
AGIO	ENVISION	
NINTH	AIT	DST
SOFTTEST		
VON	OYER	IRAQ
AGOUTI	LULU	
IRON	AGENDA	
LEND	ISLE	GAD
OATMEAL		
VOW	RAE	RYDER
IRONCLAD	IOTA	
LEON	IRA	NUNN
ELSE	CYD	GRAD

WALNUT COVE

By Mark Cullum

Aren't you a bit, um...mature for a singles bar?

Don't let this round crown fool you, honey.

I know how to keep up with the times.

Do you practice safe sex?

Absolutely. My wife thinks I'm bowling.

ARLO & JANIS

By Jimmy Johnson

MOM!

WHERE'S OUR SLEDGE HAMMER?

I DON'T KNOW

I THINK YOU DO!

ECK & MEEK

By Howie Schneider

HEY, JOHN... DID ANY POLL TAKER EVER ASK YOU FOR AN OPINION ON ANYTHING?

NO

ME NEITHER... 99% OF THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES NEVER SPOKE TO A POLLSTER...

WITH A ONE PERCENT MARGIN OF ERROR

B.C.

By Johnny Hart

NEVER RIDE ON A SUBWAY WHERE THE SECURITY GUARD IS BOUND AND GASSED

Astro-Graph

by bernice bede osol

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Try not to introduce volatile issues today into casual conversations with friends. A heated debate could result with very little provocation. Virgo, treat yourself to a birthday gift. Send for Virgo's Astro-Graph predictions for the year ahead by mailing \$1.25 plus a long, self-addressed, stamped envelope to Astro-Graph, c/o this newspaper, P.O. Box 91428, Cleveland, OH 44101-3428. Be sure to state your zodiac sign.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) An ineffective counselor could give you confusing financial advice today, so don't look to individuals who have trouble balancing their own books.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) In order to sustain your independence today, you might wisely reject the support of associates who only want to be helpful. This would be counterproductive.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Business or financial decisions you make today could be overly influenced by your negative perspective, thus causing you to limit your possibilities.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Someone you're quite friendly with is not looked upon as favorably today by another of your close pals. Don't arrange anything today that forces one upon the other.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) If you fail to lay all your cards on the table today, someone you'll be dealing with is apt to hold back critical information from you.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) If you don't have something good to say about a friend who isn't present today, it's best not to say anything at all. Your comments will be reported in detail to this individual at a later date.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Only nominal achievements are likely today, yet this won't be due to a lack of initiative. You'll have the industrious inclinations, but your methods could be self-defeating.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) If you're not careful, poor judgment on behalf of someone you're closely associated with could cause complications for you today. Keep a tight reign on your ally.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) If someone you know casually heaps unwarranted praise on you today, be aware that this individual may have ulterior motives. Don't succumb to flattery.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) If you're hoping to do something rather sticky without offending friends today, social matters must be negotiated with skill and understanding.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Two important career objectives can be achieved today — if you handle them methodically. Be careful, however, you don't let go of what you own.

MARVIN

By Tom Armstrong

YOU WANT TO PLAY TAG, BITS?

I DON'T KNOW HOW

IT'S SIMPLE! I'LL BE THE FOREST RANGER...

AND YOU CAN BE THE WILD BEAR THAT'S ABOUT TO GET THIS TAG STAPLED TO ITS EAR!

MARMADUKE

By Brad Anderson

"Just put it on the bed, Marmaduke. Don't empty it on the bed."

KIT N' CARLYLE

By Larry Wright

I'M NOT TRYING TO BE FUNNY! THERE REALLY IS A FLEA IN MY SOUP!

ALLEY OOP

By Dave Graue

OKAY, FOLKS! TH' LITTLE GUY SAYS HE NEEDS SOME ROOM, SO I WANT EVERYONE T' MOVE BACK INTO TH' TREES! NOW!!

ROOM? WHY M' LORD?

THAT'S WHY, HENRY! REASON ENOUGH? !!

Y... YES M' LORD! RUN, LADS!! SAVE YOURSELVES!!

WINTHROP

By Dick Cavalli

WHAT'S GOING ON, WINTHROP?

YOU KNOW ANYTHING THAT'LL CURE THE HICCLIPS?

SNAFU

By Bruce Beattie

"World land speed record... sure, bud. License and registration, please."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

"They'd have a LOT of different Michael Jacksons to choose from if they ever put him on a stamp."

CALVIN AND HOBBS

By Bill Watterson

WHEN YOU THINK HOW WELL BASIC APPLIANCES WORK, IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE ANYONE EVER GETS ON AN AIRPLANE.

THE BORN LOSER

By Art and Chip Sansom

"OUR ECONOMY IS IN A SHAMBLES! RECORD DEBT... SPIRALING INFLATION..."

SLEMPING SALES... FALTERING EARNINGS... IT'S DOWNRIGHT DEPRESSING!

"I DON'T THINK I'D BE ABLE TO SURVIVE IF IT WASN'T FOR MY SUNNY DISPOSITION!"

FRANK AND ERNEST

By Bob Thaves

MATERNITY

THAT'S LIFE... YOU COME INTO THE WORLD WITH NOTHING AND, WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT, THE FIRST GUY YOU MEET IS A DOCTOR WITH PORSCHE PAYMENTS!

PEANUTS

By Charles M. Schulz

MY BROTHER SAYS HE DOESN'T THINK WE GO TO HEAVEN IN A GOLDEN CHARIOT...

"OH, FOOLISH GALATIANS, WHO HATH BEWITCHED YOU?"

WHAT DOES "HATH" MEAN?

GARFIELD

By Jim Davis

NOW ALL MY KITE NEEDS IS A TAIL.

IS IT RAINING? NOPE. IT'S DROOLING.

Sports Scene

BASEBALL Major League Baseball At A Glance

Table with columns for League, Team, W, L, Pct, GB. Includes East and West Divisions.

Monday's Games: Chicago 8, New York 6, Milwaukee 6, Boston 0, Baltimore 2, Kansas City 1, Cleveland 2, Toronto 1, Oakland 3, Minnesota 2, St. Louis 1, Philadelphia 0.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: East Division: Pittsburgh 83, Montreal 79, St. Louis 71, Chicago 70, New York 69, Philadelphia 58. West Division: Atlanta 87, Cincinnati 73, San Diego 76, Houston 68, San Francisco 64, Los Angeles 58.

Monday's Games: Philadelphia 6, Montreal 2, New York 10, Chicago 8, Pittsburgh 5, St. Louis 4, Houston 5, San Francisco 0, Los Angeles 11.

Today's Games: New York (Gibson 0-1) at Chicago (Bowe 5-8), 2:30 p.m.; Atlanta (Avery 10-9) at Cincinnati (Belcher 11-14), 7:35 p.m.; Montreal (Hill 15-8) at Philadelphia (Schilling 13-9), 7:35 p.m.

TENNIS: The Pampa High tennis teams participated in the Amarillo Team Tournament last weekend, placing sixth out of the 16 teams entered in the two-day meet.

Baseball results: Pampa defeated Canyon and El Paso Burges while losing to Lubbock Coronado and Lubbock High.

Girls' Singles: Patsy Barker (P) def. Erin Metzcalfe, 6-2, 6-2; Jamie Barker (P) def. Robin Pearey, 6-1, 6-0; Meredith Horton (P) def. Jill Herrick, 6-2, 6-2.

Girls' Singles: Patsy Barker (P) def. Erin Metzcalfe, 6-2, 6-2; Jamie Barker (P) def. Robin Pearey, 6-1, 6-0; Meredith Horton (P) def. Jill Herrick, 6-2, 6-2.

Volleyball: Pampa 9th grade results Monday in Amarillo. Caprock def. Pampa, 13-15, 14-16.

Fort Elliott controls volleyball tournament

BRISCOE - Fort Elliott completely dominated its own volleyball invitational last weekend, with the varsity defeating the junior varsity in the finals, 15-1, 15-10. "Fort Elliott has a pretty powerful program," said Kelton coach Brad Slatton...

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR FLUID INJECTION WELL PERMIT. Dyme Oil & Gas, Inc., P.O. Box 386, Borger, Tx. 79008 has applied to the Railroad Commission of Texas for a permit to inject fluid into a formation...

1 Card of Thanks

FAYE PHILLIPS We wish to thank our neighbors, friends, and anyone who in any way acted in love and sympathy during the recent loss of our beloved Faye.

1c Memorials

ADULT Literacy Council, P.O. Box 2022, Pampa, Tx. 79066. AGAPE Assistance, P.O. Box 2397, Pampa, Tx. 79066-2397.

14e Memorials

TOP O' Texas Crisis Pregnancy Center, P.O. Box 2097, Pampa, Tx. 79066-2097. TRALEE Crisis Center For Women Inc., P.O. Box 2880, Pampa, Tx. 79066.

2 Museums

WHITE Deer Land Museum in Pampa, P.O. Box 1556, Pampa, Tx. 79066. WHITE Deer Land Museum in Pampa, Tuesday thru Sunday 1:30-4 p.m. Special tours by appointment.

3 Personal

SHAKLEE Vitamins, diet, skin-care, household, job opportunity. Donna Turner, 665-6065. Alcohols Anonymous 1425 Alcock 665-9702.

3 Personal

IF someone's drinking is causing you problems, try Al-Anon. 669-3564, 665-7921. H.E.A.R.T. Women's Support Group meets 2nd and 4th Monday 1-2:30 p.m. 119 N. Frost. Information 669-1131.

5 Special Notices

Pampa Lodge 966 AF&AM 420 W. Kingsmill 7:30 p.m. Thursday. ADVERTISING Material to be placed in the Pampa News, MUST be placed through the Pampa News Office Only.

14b Appliance Repair

For Appliance Repairs Microwave Repairs 665-8894. RENT TO RENT RENT TO OWN We have Rental Furniture and Appliances to suit your needs. Call for estimate.

14d Carpentry

Ralph Baxter Contractor & Builder Custom Homes or Remodeling 665-8248. Panhandle House Leveling Floors sagging, walls cracking, door dragging, Foundation and concrete work.

14e Carpet Service

NU-WAY Cleaning service, carpets, upholstery, walls, ceilings. Quality doesn't cost. It pays! No steam used. Bob Marx owner- operator. 665-3541. Free estimates.

14e Carpet Service

RAINBOW International Carpet Dyeing and Cleaning Co. Free estimates. Call 665-1431. SARA'S Draperies 20% off on Custom Draperies. 665-0021, 665-0919.

14h General Services

COX Fence Company. Repair old fence or build new. Free estimate. 669-7769. Laramore Master Locksmith Call me out to let you in 665-Keys.

14i General Repair

Commercial, Residential Mowing Chuck Morgan 669-0511. IF it's broken, leaking, or won't turn off, call the Fix It Shop, 669-3434. Lamps repaired.

14j Ditching

BOBCAT loader, 5 foot bucket or forks, maneuvers in tight places. Ron's Construction 669-3172. OVERHEAD Door Repair. Kidwell Construction. 669-6347.

14k Plowing, Yard Work

YOUR Lawn & Garden. Mow, rototill, plow, tree trimming, hauling. Call 665-9609. DAVIS TREE SERVICE We do all types of tree and ranch work. Free estimates. Call 669-2230.

14r Plowing, Yard Work

QUALITY Lawn Care & Landscaping. Let us take "quality" care of your lawn. \$10-up. 665-1633. 14s Plumbing & Heating Builders Plumbing Supply 535 S. Cuyler 665-3711.

14t Radio and Television

CURTIS MATHES We will now do service work on most Major Brands of TV's and VCR's. 2211 Perryton Pkwy. 665-0504. Wayne's T.V. Service Microwave ovens repaired 665-3030.

15 Instruction

PRIVATE trumpet and piano lessons. For more information call Ted 665-3389. REGISTERED Day Care. Experienced, dependable. Nutritious meals and snacks. Will also pick up from Austin. 665-7856.

21 Help Wanted

NOTICE Readers are urged to fully investigate advertisements which require payment in advance for information, services or goods. Mr. Gatti's Pizza Needs delivery drivers and in store personnel. Must be positive minded, friendly, and a desire for advancement.

21 Help Wanted

ACCEPTING applications for home health aides and also part time LVN. Competitive pay, good working conditions, benefits. Apply in person at Abba Home Health, 516 W. Kentucky, between 9 a.m.-12 noon.

50 Building Supplies

HOUSTON LUMBER CO. 420 W. Foster 669-6881. White House Lumber Co. 101 S. Ballard 669-3291.

53 Machinery and Tools

SIoux Valve Face Grinding machine with all accessories. \$650 firm. 669-3506 after 5 p.m. 32 foot Crustbuster wheat drill, 10 inch spacing. Field ready. \$2500 firm. 665-8093.

57 Good Things To Eat

APPLES are ready at Gething Ranch. Call 669-3925 before you come! GARDEN fresh Swiss Chard, turnips and greens. 665-4842.

Bob Johnson Motor Company in Borger advertisement featuring various vehicles like 1992 Ford Ranger Supercab XLT, 1992 Dodge Grand Caravan LE, 1992 Ford Mustang LX Hatchback, 1992 Dodge Spirit ES, and a list of special offers and used program cars.

