

Letters to the Hobbit

Dear Hobbit

Class Action Law Suit?

Recently I read an article written by a medical authority that stated, to my horror, that the hospital my son was sent to for emergency removal of ingrown toenail at 3am 2 years ago, did not actually have the expertise or capability to do so. The article stated that the hospital did not have a 24-hour emergency onychocryptosis¹ interventional service.

This is terrible news. How can the state-run Middle-Earth Ambulance Service send my kid to a public hospital that could not offer the appropriate level of care my son required? And how can this public hospital continue to treat my son's ingrown toenail

at 3am in the morning when it was not equipped to do so? This is very irresponsible action on the part of the hospital and the ambulance service!

Can I start a class-action lawsuit together with other patients receiving inappropriate ingrown toenail care, against this said public hospital and the Middle-Earth Ambulance Service for rendering inappropriate levels of emergency ingrown toenail care to my son?

Yours truly

Mrs Boey Song

Angry Mother of Ingrown Toenail Patient

Dear Ring-Bearer

Orc Healers Council

Recently, the relevant authorities wanted to push through changes to the Orc Healers Council. This is very worrisome to us simple registered Orc healer folks. Let me explain. First, we Orc healers are registered with the said Council and we pay hefty subscriptions to run the Orc Healers Council, and we are all made to vote for a minority of members who then sit on this Council. The majority are appointed by the powerful white wizards that reside in some scary white monolithic building.

After taking our money, the Council has the power to try and to judge us should someone (elves, humans, dwarfs, just about everyone in the Realms) complain against us. The Orc Healers Council can caution us, suspend us, fine us and even strike us off the Orc Healers' Roll.

Things keep getting worse. Now they are changing the laws so that the Chairman of the Disciplinary Conclave (a committee of the Council) need not be an Orc and fines are going up in multiples! What is the point of making us vote for the Orc Healers Council's elected members when the Chairman is not even an Orc? They have also decided to expand the number of people on the Council and allow

complainant appeals to the Wizards' Court. All these will inevitably raise the costs of running the Orc Council which we regular Orc healers have to finance.

How can there be a body that claims to be self-regulatory and self-financing when its folks have no control over how the body is run and how costs are incurred? We also have no say over who is appointed, and worse, external people are allowed to decide the fate of our members! The only power this body seems to have is the ability (or the compulsion) to elect a minority of the body's ruling members. Where is the natural justice in all this? I should have been born a wizard... last I heard they could even afford to go for long cooking classes in posh faraway Elven academies with their families while I slave in my high-rental 600 square feet cave...

We should start an Orc revolution to safeguard our rights.

Orctimus Prime
The Transformer Orc Clinic
16 White Building Road
Middle Earth Postal Code 169854

Dear Homo-Brevis

Short gets Shorter

Recently there have been rumours circulating that the Wizards in the White Tower are thinking of having 2-month Houseman postings for surgical disciplines. I think this is truly a terrible idea. 4 months is barely enough; we can't make it any shorter. Housemanship is already so watered-down. Nowadays housemen cannot even perform simple procedures without supervision, complete simple documentation like signing death certificates or taking consent for procedures. Even case summaries are now computerised "cut-and-paste" jobs. If they are only with us for only 2 months, what will they learn? They will NOT be useful to the department and they will learn nothing much. How am I supposed to judge the quality of a houseman after only 2 months? Even when we hire a department

clerical staff, we give a probationary period of 3 to 6 months to allow for proper assessment. It's a lose-lose proposition except that it can perhaps satisfy these young doctors who can then claim they have done a variety of important postings in their CVs, and wizards can then claim they put in place a system to "thoroughly expose the houseman to a variety of important postings".

My old bosses will flip in their graves if they hear about this 2-month posting business.

Professor Dua Bulan Bin Empat Bulan
Chief of Surgery,
Department of Surgery
Mount Doom Hospital

Dear Hobbit

Why I Not Great?

I am very depressed. I am trained as an onychocryptosis interventionist in a famous overseas institution. Since coming back to Eastern General Hospital, I have been faithfully serving out my bond and running the emergency 24-hour ingrown toenail service. Despite my age and seniority, I am still on-call for 10 to 12 times a month. I rush back to the hospital in the middle of the night many times a month so that I can give ingrown toenail interventions. For the rest of the month, the 24-hour service is covered by visiting consultants. Sometimes, I get so many cases in the night that I just sleep over in the hospital and my family life suffers. All this for the love of my work and my patients – after all, the pay is not great. Life in private practice is better and the financial rewards greater.

Recently, a famous doctor in our Realm publicly declared that the ingrown toenail service in our hospital wasn't so great. As a result, my morale and that of my department and hospital has suffered greatly. After all, what is great and what is not

so great? We have tried our best despite limited resources. Can one be great if one is put on call 12 times a month? What are the parameters for a great ingrown toenail service, or any other medical and surgical service for that matter? What is the evidence for this claim? We try our best, yet we still get these comments. Anyway, our outcome statistics showed an ingrown toenail recurrence rate of 4.4% (unilateral and large toe) which is in line with what is achieved in the best centres of the world that offer such a service.

I am seriously thinking of tendering my resignation soon. After all, my grandfather owns a bank or two with excellent Tier A capital and maybe I should be a banker instead (just like what he told me in the first place).

Dr Chin Tu Lan
Senior Consultant
Head, Onychocryptosis Interventional Service
Rivendell Hospital

To the Short One

Surcharge more than Charge

I feel short-changed (nothing to do with you).

Recently I received a bill from Middle-Earth hospital which stated that my surgeon's fees were far more than what I expected. I questioned the billing clerk who said it was for a 200% surcharge. I am surprised. How can a public hospital allow a surcharge to be in the quantum of 200%? I.e. I paid 3 times the price of what the listed charge should be. I understand the need for a surcharge in many circumstances, but how can the surcharge be twice

that of the normal price? The surcharge quantum should be less than the base price! If the surcharge is much more than the base price, then shouldn't the price be reset? Even peak-hour taxi surcharge costs only a few dollars and my Chinese New Year hair perm surcharge was only about 20%, not 200%!

Ms Liao Lui

Chartered Accountant and Price-Conscious Patient

Dear Katek

I am very stressed. My father is sick and in and out of the hospital, chalking up large hospital bills. But that is not the problem. I visit him often when he is in hospital. My father and I are smokers so each time I visit him, I will wheel him out to the open-air car park area and we have a smoke. Father and son bonding is very important. But now with the anti-smoking laws in place, my father and I cannot even have a cigarette in the open-air car park of the hospital! We have been told not to smoke within a five-metre perimeter of the hospital grounds. That would mean that my father and I would have to smoke in the middle of a large two-way public road and run the risk of being knocked down by a car! Or

not smoke at all. I think I am able to not light-up when I visit my old man for an hour or two, but how can my father stop smoking all of a sudden when he is warded in a hospital for a few days, especially when he has been smoking for > 50 years? Even smoking cessation clinics do not advocate immediate and sudden cessation of smoking. This is not reasonable, yes? We should draw up a yellow-box for people to light-up in a hospital.

Mr Mah Boh Loh

Despatch Rider

Hoon Kee Transport Pte. Ltd.

Dear Squirt,

Last Words

Ah Hia, *lim beh tong kim chin chia lat liao*². I am in death row waiting to be hanged. However, I need to plan for the welfare of my fambly, my chewren, my girlfrens, Karaoke Xiao Mei Meis etc etc. Do you know if there are any tua towkays³, tycoons etc who need a kidney or two, cornea, middle finger etc etc whom I can give to when I die? I don't need any of these organs with me in my next life. Just let me die with my little brother and his two frens can already. They say cannot die without my little brother and his two frens if not next life become *cha bor*⁴. The rest if nobody want can make *kiam chye organs*⁵ soup.

I am sure the towkays will take good care of my fambly, chewren, girlfrens etc once they take my organs. They will know how to compensate, sorry, I mean reimburse them for my loss. Of course, I will titch all of them not to deny or confirm where my organs went to. Please help a dying man!

Tan Ah Long

Aka One-Ear Dragon

Cell #29125,

Helm's Keep Prison

References:

1. Onychocryptosis – ingrown toenail | 2. I am in such big trouble now | 3. Big bosses
4. Female | 5. Preserved vegetables with pig offal soup