

*Larry E. Lutz, M.Ed.*

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June 6, 2016

Emily Johnson, Project Manager  
Sunset Advisory Commission  
P.O. Box 13066  
Austin, TX 78711

Ms. Johnson:

As a Texas Department of Family and Protective Services retiree, I understand how important your review of the Employee Retirement System of Texas is. As a person of advancing years, I also understand how senior citizens, often without energy, resources and even cognitive ability get frustrated, lost in the system, and go without needed medical supplies. I would like to offer you information about my recent experience.

First, let me say that I spent most of the day on hold trying to talk with an ERS representative most of the day last Thursday and Friday and today, Monday, June 6, 2016. During that time, my phone connection with ERS dropped multiple times, forcing me to call back, get back in the queue, only to be dropped again. I know that ERS, like most State agencies is woefully understaffed. At DFPS, we suffered with that situation constantly. However, without access to problem resolution, how is a senior citizen to get needed information and diabetes supplies.

I receive my health benefits through the Kelsey Advantage Plan, and overall, I would like to say that I receive some of the finest health care that I have received in my entire life through them. Their service and physicians is outstanding. Unfortunately, my physician, who is the finest PCP that I have ever had, made one simple mistake, one that should have been caught and remedied very quickly. Instead it, equally as quickly, spiraled out of control.

Dr. Christine Le, OD of Kelsey Seybold send a prescription for diabetes medication and equipment (glucometer and test strips) to Randall's Pharmacy, 5586 Wesleyan, Houston, TX 77005 on Thursday, June 2, 2016 in the morning. I have only been on Medicare for a short period of time and did not fully understand the intricacies of what is covered under Part B and Part D, and how the filing for those differs. I had purposefully switched my pharmacy to them from the Walgreen's Pharmacy, 3745 Westheimer Rd., Houston, TX 77027 because that pharmacy routinely tried to force me into a brand name medication when Dr. Le prescribed a generic, made repeated mistakes on label instruction and

was generally not an acceptable pharmacy. The Kelsey Seybold pharmacy at 1111 Augusta, Houston, Texas 77057 is very inconvenient for me to get to.)

In any case, my pharmacist and staff at Randall's tried valiantly **all day on both Thursday and Friday** to get my prescription filled. They are truly wonderful with a firm belief in customer service; I would especially like to commend the pharmacist who is always so totally helpful. The insulin pens were covered, with some difficulty. SilverScript/Caremark, the prescription drug benefits manager, instead of telling the pharmacy that the glucometer and test strips had to be billed under health benefits, and not under prescription benefits, simply told the pharmacy "PATIENT IS MEDICARE INELIGIBLE." (Copy of their printout is enclosed.) **Everything would have been cleared up immediately had SilverScript/Caremark** provided good information to the pharmacy.

When I called SilverScript, she explained, after a 45-minute wait on hold, that they did not cover the glucometer and test strips. She also told me that "PATIENT IS INELIGIBLE" really means that "these supplies are ineligible for coverage under Medicare Part D." I have certainly seen my share of bureaucratic double-talk in my life, but this one is certainly the farthest stretch that I've ever heard.

One of the things that I'd like to know from ERS is how to file a formal complaint against SilverScript/Caremark. I have, as I said, tried to call them for two and one-half days now, as well as sending them two emails through their system; I simply cannot get through to talk with them. Another senior citizen without the skills and resources that I have would have given up. They would have paid hundreds of dollars for covered diabetes supplies or simply not acquired them. We cannot let that happen because of SilverScript/Caremark's lack of customer service.

Today, I finally got through to Kelsey Advantage, and they are taking care of the matter, no thanks to ERS and SilverScript/Caremark.

I hope that this information will assist the Sunset Commission in making its recommendations to the Legislature and other interested individuals.

Sincerely,



Larry E. Lutz

cc: Employees Retirement System of Texas, 200 E. 18<sup>th</sup> St., Austin, TX 78701  
KelseyCare Advantage, 11511 Shadow Creek Parkway, Pearland, TX 77584  
SilverScript Insurance Company, P.O. Box 52067, Phoenix, AZ 85072-8067  
Customer Relations, Walgreen Company, 1419 Lake Cook Rd., MS #L390, Deerfield, Illinois 60015  
Customer Support Center, Safeway, Inc., M.S. 10501, P.O. Box 29093, Phoenix, AZ 85038