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The Law Offices of Stephenson, Acquisto & Colman

Health Care Reimbursement Lawyers Provide Relief Where it Hurts: In the Insurance Denial

Joy Young Stephenson set out to be a doctor, like her brother. But along the way, she realized law had a stronger pull on her than medicine did, so she became an attorney instead. She opened a practice specializing in health care and began treating patients to a brand of healing no doctor provides: She works on behalf of clients when insurance companies or government payors deny claims or dispute contract provisions. Her operating room is a courtroom.



JOY YOUNG STEPHENSON



GEORGE COLMAN



RICHARD LOVICH

20-plus attorneys. Many of them have been named Super Lawyers® and hold Martindale-Hubbell's highest rating. These legal minds are, of course, key in the firm's success. And so are the medical minds.

The Law Offices of Stephenson Acquisto & Colman, or SAC, represents clients large and small – at one end, major hospitals seeking rightful reimbursements, and at the other, individuals whose insurance companies wrongfully deny their claims. Fighting these battles since 1989, SAC is recognized as a leader in health care law.

The firm stands ready to discuss client matters with the insurer, then, if necessary, to take the case to arbitration, to trial and to appeal. This is a litigation practice. “We don’t rest until we achieve our goal, and make no mistake, getting you the appropriate reimbursement is our sole pursuit,” Stephenson says. “At the same time, we take the most efficient and economical route to reach that objective.”

Stephenson has built SAC into a trailblazer in the health care law industry, and she is its driving force. The practice has grown to more than 100 staff members, including

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Where other attorneys must bring in outside experts, SAC has physicians and nurses on staff to evaluate the health care side of an insurer’s nonpayment decision. A common reason insurance companies give for denial of coverage is that a procedure wasn’t medically necessary. If it really was, SAC’s medical professionals arm the attorneys with facts to refute that argument.

Over the years, SAC’s attorneys have seen many changes in health care, and a growing need for strong and aggressive legal professionals to address them on behalf of providers.

“With tougher government regulations, payors’ tighter reimbursement policies and the still-recovering economy, hospitals face serious financial challenges,” says partner George Colman, who, in more than 40 years of practice, has represented more than 100 health care providers in revenue recovery and business office consulting. “We’re here to help our clients with their payor issues. Some of these are more than legal matters. They’re social imperatives. If a hospital doesn’t get paid, it can’t provide services. If a hospital can’t provide services, people suffer. We have helped 85 percent of the hospitals in California keep their doors open.”

Richard Lovich is managing litigation attorney for The Law Offices of Stephenson, Acquisto & Colman. He has more than 28 years of litigation experience and was for 15 years the chief trial lawyer and managing attorney for the Los Angeles law offices of two of the nation’s largest insurance companies. He can tell story after story about clients snarled in a labyrinth of insurance company denials of coverage. Among the most challenging aspects of this area of law, he says, is misinformation and misunderstanding within professional ranks of how the health care industry’s financial side works.

“That creates difficulties,” Lovich says. “We try to help everyone involved reach a clearer understanding. That leads to better decisions.”



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