



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

August 9, 2019

Mr. James A. Barber
Executive Director
PEER Committee
Post Office Box 1204
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1204

Dear Mr. Barber:

Although the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) has made every effort to provide accurate responses to the questions you posed in your letter of August 1, 2019, we may not have been able to ascertain all of the pertinent facts because several persons involved in facilitating the Agency's previous relationship with Provide are no longer employed with MSDH. Following are the Agency's responses to your questions regarding a "possible relationship" between MSDH staff and Provide:

1. Has the Mississippi State Department of Health had a formal or contractual relationship with Provide? If so, what were the periods and nature of such relationships?

In researching all available records and documents, we could not find any documentation substantiating that MSDH has ever had a contractual relationship with Provide. MSDH did work with Provide to conduct a Client Experience Study. The Study was conducted by select MSDH employees in conjunction with Provide, Inc. This study was approved by the MSDH Institutional Review Board (in compliance with 45 CFR Part 46, Basic HHS Policy for Protection of Human Subjects Research). This study has been discontinued.

2. Have MSDH staff received any training from Provide? If so, over what period was the training provided and what was the nature of the training?

In June 2017, The Federal Department of Health and Human Services conducted a site visit to MSDH regarding the Title X grant for family planning services to assess compliance with programmatic requirements.

Following the visit, DHHS cited MSDH for not meeting the Title X requirement of 42 CFR 59.5(a)(5), providing referral documents that included information about adoption, termination, and continuing the pregnancy.* The required corrective action in response to the finding was that MSDH "must implement policies and procedures requiring its sites and all sub-recipients to make options counseling available to pregnant women." Provide, Inc. provided training on options counseling to select MSDH employees and sub-recipients during the last quarter of 2017 and the first quarter of 2018 to facilitate implementation of the corrective action plan.

3. Do MSDH staff use any publication or information from Provide to counsel patients who come to a department clinic requesting an abortion or other health-related services? If so, what is the nature of such counseling?

No.

4. Have MSDH staff, at any time, corresponded with Provide staff by letter or email? If so, please provide copies of such correspondence.

MSDH has done a search for all letters and emails and has located numerous documents, which will be provided to PEER as soon as possible.

I trust that we have provided you with complete answers to your inquiry. If you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Thomas Dobbs, MD MPH
State Health Officer

*This requirement was changed effective July 15, 2019.