

AUDIE L. MURPHY MEMORIAL VETERANS HOSPITAL  
7400 W. MINTER BOULEVARD  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78284

January 25, 1978

671/136  
SSN: 488 42 0476  
McCUTCHEON, Audry E.

Honorable Lloyd Bentsen  
United States Senator  
912 Federal Building  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Senator Bentsen:

In response to your request, I had a member of my staff look into the circumstances surrounding the transfer of Mr. McCutcheon from the Memorial Medical Center in Corpus Christi, Texas to the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital.

Mr. McCutcheon was previously hospitalized at this hospital in February, 1977. During this period of hospitalization, a cardiac catheterization was performed and heart surgery was recommended, which he refused.

On January 6, 1978, Dr. Hector Garcia, a physician at the Memorial Medical Center in Corpus Christi, Texas called our admitting physician and requested Mr. McCutcheon be transferred to our hospital. On the basis of the medical information furnished by Dr. Garcia, it was our admitting physician's opinion Mr. McCutcheon's medical condition was so grave, as to prevent him from being transported to this hospital. Between January 6, 1978 and January 11, 1978 there were several contacts between our professional staff and the professional staff of Memorial Medical Center. Our physicians were never convinced Mr. McCutcheon's medical condition had improved to the point where he could be safely transported. Although various means of transportation were discussed, no commitment was made by a member of our medical staff for transportation to this hospital.

On January 12, 1978, Mr. McCutcheon left the Memorial Medical Center against the advice of his physician and was brought to this hospital by a friend in a private car. He was admitted on January 13, 1978 with a diagnosis of unstable angina. Since his admission, Mr. McCutcheon has been treated on our General Medical Ward and in our Coronary Care Unit.

On January 20, 1978 a cardiac catheterization was performed and heart surgery recommended. Mr. McCutcheon has indicated he will consent to the surgery, which is scheduled to be performed in the near future.

Honorable Lloyd Bentsen

Mr. McCutcheon was interviewed after his admission to the hospital and stated that he left the Memorial Medical Center against the medical advice of his physician because of his anxiety over the payment of the hospital bill and the physician's charges.

There was a misunderstanding on the part of the physicians at Memorial Medical Center that Mr. McCutcheon was to be authorized transportation to this hospital. Our professional staff was never provided with satisfactory medical evidence that the veteran's condition was sufficiently stable to permit his transfer. Arrangements for transportation at government expense were subject to receipt of such evidence.

Thank you for your interest in Mr. McCutcheon and in all our veterans.

Sincerely,

JOSE R. CORONADO  
Director