

STATEMENT FROM DR. TRACEY WELLENDORF

October 15, 2019

Recently my ear, nose, and throat clinic, Wellendorf ENT, and I reached an agreement with the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Iowa and the Department of Health and Human Services to resolve concerns the government alleged about the handling of certain sinus surgical patients in 2014 and 2015.

We are happy and relieved to have this matter behind us. The process with the government has gone on for years and been expensive, time-consuming, and distracting from the practice of medicine. Thankfully we can now look forward to focusing on what we do best at Wellendorf ENT – patient care.

In the agreement neither I nor our clinic admitted to doing anything wrong and there were no adverse patient outcomes in the cases that are the subject of this agreement. It is also worth noting that no lawsuit or court action of any kind has been filed. Everything is settled.

We have always practiced medicine with the patient's best interests at heart. But there are areas of medicine where, we believe, reasonable people can disagree about the best treatment course for a patient. Unfortunately, in today's highly-regulated medical environment, those disagreements can become very substantial legal disputes.

Why did we settle? I felt that it was in the best interests of our staff, our patients, and the communities we serve to put the legal matters behind us rather than have a battle in court, and so that is what we have done.

Wellendorf ENT delivers the highest quality care to its patients. That will be confirmed by some temporary increased compliance measures that we have committed to undertake as part of this agreement. Frankly, we welcome the additional scrutiny because we are confident of what those oversight measures will show – excellence and complete adherence to regulatory requirements.

I want to thank the staff at Wellendorf ENT for their support and the good work they do every day. I also want to thank our patients, other health care providers, and the hospitals where we practice for supporting us and helping keep rural Iowans healthy. Again, we are happy to have this government matter settled and believe the best times for our clinic and the people who work in it are ahead.

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