

DAWN SWICK

Belle-GraceShilohs
320 Meadowbrook Road
Trafford, PA 15085
Phone (412) 856-4579
Belle-GraceShilohs@worldnet.att.net

February 19, 2004

East Suburban Animal Hospital
5051 William Penn Highway
Export, PA 15632

Dear Dr. Caslow,

I am writing to you in regards to my now deceased dog, Allie, who you spayed on Tuesday, February 10, 2004. As per our phone conversation, you told me it was an uneventful spay and everything went well through the surgery. You also told me you haven't lost a dog due to bleeding out for years, that something must have slipped off one of her arteries, causing her to hemorrhage.

When I called at 1:50 pm, she was still in surgery and was told to call back at 3, which I did. I was told that she was just waking up from the surgery and to call back after 5pm. At that point, at 5, I was told she could go home anytime after 6. I arrived at your clinic at approx 6:45, where I waited for at least 20 minutes to get waited on. After paying on my bill, I then waited again at least 15 minutes for someone to get my dog. When they appeared at the top of the steps, Allie looked horrible, barely able to hold her head up, and the staff member had a difficult time getting her to even go through the door. I remember her saying, "Come on girl we have to get this door shut." I walked up the stairs to get her, as your staff member couldn't get her to go down. She barely recognized me. She was so weak in her rear that she literally slid down the steps. We went outside where she immediately released her bowels, and then tried to sit/lay down. At that point I questioned the staff member about her condition...is she alright to go home, and was reassured that it was only the anesthesia that was causing this. I got her to the car, where I had to lift her rear in, and petted her head, noticing that her ears, muzzle, bridge of her nose were all ice cold.

After arriving home approx 8 pm, she didn't improve, so I called your emergency number shortly after 9 pm, and talked to the vet on call, Dr Schweingruber. I told her who I was, what procedure Allie had done, reminded her of her past history of bloat, gave her symptoms—labored breathing, tummy swelling, but soft, not hard like bloat, and just overall weakness. I was told by your vet that this is normal because of the pain related to the spay surgery, give her 2 Digel or Gasx tablets. Also, if she got worse to get her to the hospital. I specifically asked her "your hospital or the ER" and she told me the ER. When I got off the phone, I tried to give the medicine as directed and noticed her gums were gray. We rushed to the ER, where they had to carry her in on a stretcher. She was in severe shock. They tried to stabilize her, and tried to stop the internal bleeding. You have been sent a copy of her files. Allie died during surgery at 2:30 AM.

I feel your staff was extremely negligent in my dogs care. She was obviously in shock and hemorrhaging when I picked her up, but your staff apparently didn't check her vital stats before she was released. If they had, they would have noticed her shocky condition. If I had known the signs

of shock, I would have connected the cold head/ears to shock , returning her immediately to your office. I also got the impression your vet on call didn't want to be bothered with this situation. Just push it off to the ER.

If it hadn't been for the negligence of your staff releasing a dog in her condition, I wouldn't have a bill of \$992.25 from the ER Clinic. In all honesty, I feel this is your responsibility. I would have never had to take Allie there if your hospital staff was doing their job properly, because someone there should have noticed her declining condition. If her blood pressure, breathing and heart rate had been taken right before she was to come home, she would have never been released.

May I make a suggestion that your spay surgeries are only done in the morning. Sending a dog home 3-4 hours after surgery is just uncalled for. I have discussed this with several people and all have told me that their vets keep the dog overnight. None have ever heard of sending a dog home four hours after surgery. You and your staff need to rethink how to handle the surgery schedule better, as well as monitoring after surgery.

Allie was priceless to me. She was a top winning show dog, the GV winner for 2003, and in the Shiloh world even after the spay worth at least \$5000. If she hadn't been spayed she would have been worth so much more, but due to the bloat issue last fall, I was advised to have this done. I was doing what was best for my dog, and now all I have are memories. She was that once in a life time dog that most people don't have the privledge to own. She was my doggy soul-mate, the love of my life. Although she can never be replaced, if I could find another puppy of her high quality, it will cost me \$3500.00 to \$4500.00. That is just for the puppy and doesn't include all the training that was involved with Allie.

I have enclosed a copy of the ER bill as well as having one faxed to your office. I do believe that it was through the negligence of your staff as well as poor unprofessional advice from the vet on call that I incurred this cost and do expect to be reimbursed. I trusted you and your staff with my dog, and many mistakes were made. I just pray that you rethink your methods and make some changes so this doesn't happen again.

Sincerely,

Dawn M. Swick