

Here is a Community Howard Regional Health statement you can use for the Kokomo Tribune in response to your inquiry regarding Dr. Ritchie's lawsuit:

On November 10, 2014, Michael Ritchie, M.D. filed a lawsuit against Community Howard Regional Health, some of its medical staff members, Community Health Network, and Community Physician Network. While the Hospital's usual practice is not to comment on pending litigation, in this circumstance some comment is necessary in order to correct some inaccurate information.

Community Howard is committed to providing quality patient care. As part of that commitment, Community Howard, like most hospitals routinely reviews patient care to ensure that appropriate professional standards have been met. The peer review process is done in a confidential manner so that health care providers' privacy interests are protected while the process is ongoing. It is not unusual for a physician's medical staff membership and privileges to be provisionally suspended while the process is underway. Indiana law prohibits the Hospital from discussing specific details about the process until its results are final, and the peer review process concerning Dr. Ritchie is not yet final.

The Hospital regrets that Dr. Ritchie has made this private matter a public issue, and that he has attempted to stop the process before it is complete. The court denied Dr. Ritchie's request for a preliminary injunction to stop the peer review process. Specifically, the court stated, "The Court finds the Plaintiff's request for restoration of the Plaintiff's medical privileges and to halt any process under which the Plaintiff's medical privileges at Community were or could be suspended is not an emergency. Therefore, the Court denies the Plaintiff's application for Temporary Restraining Order without Notice." Community Howard will request that the court allow its peer review process to continue, as it is supposed to under Indiana statute and the Hospital's bylaws.