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via email only

Michael Bravoco, M.D.  
Philip Korzeniowski, M.D.  
Somers Manor OBGYN  
599 Shore Road, Ste. 101  
Somers Point, NJ 08244

Dear Dr. Bravoco and Dr. Korzeniowski,

I want to thank you for taking the time to speak with me about my experience during the birth of my son, Cole. Before we spoke, I had intended to send you a letter explaining my concerns. Although you offered a very well-reasoned perspective on the events surrounding my labor and delivery, I still wanted to put this in writing. Here is where I'll abandon diplomacy: the way Dr. Rezvina handled my labor and the delivery of my son was an egregious use of bullying and scare tactics by a physician who, despite being, as you said a "skilled surgeon," has absolutely no bedside manners.

My labor was going well and intervention-free from the time I arrived at Shore at 5-6 centimeters dilated. At approximately 9 centimeters, and knowing I was not far from meeting my baby, I went from the very compassionate and supportive care of Jamie Sosa, to the nasty and confrontational ego of Dr. Rezvina. Before examining me, she offered me a pedundal block, as up until this point I had not had an epidural or any pain medications. I had not asked for any medications and politely declined the pedundal block (my doula recalls that I actually said, "no, thank you.") She then asked how big my last baby was, and I told her five pounds, fifteen ounces. She asked how long I had pushed then, and although I could not recall, my husband said it had been two hours. It was at the time she said I needed a c-section – *without examining me, without reviewing my son's heart tones, and without any further discussion as to other options.* She told me to move from my hands and knees, as I had been preparing to deliver that way, to my back on the bed.

Dr. Rezvina then said my labor was taking too long, but did not elaborate. I had a contraction and asked her to stop talking, with the intent of resuming our discussion after the contraction had passed. In front of a nurse, a midwife, my doula and my husband, she stormed out of the room, saying she did not appreciate being talked to like that. This should not need to be explained to an obstetrician, but requesting that she explain medical options between contractions is not an unreasonable request.

She returned a few minutes later, and said "you're the lawyer, right? What would you do if one of your clients was not listening to you?" My job experience has nothing to do with the fact that at that moment, I was a naked, sweaty, exhausted pregnant woman, in pain and ready to have a baby. Then she put some papers in front of my face, claiming that they were legal forms ensuring I knew that it

was my fault if my baby was brain damaged or died because I refused a c-section. Please note, at this point, I had *not* refused anything. I had asked for a moment allow a contraction to pass before continuing to get all the information I needed to make a decision. I asked for an epidural so I could relax and maybe the baby would come, which Dr. Rezvina refused because she wanted to do a c-section with a spinal block. In any event, all talk of pedantal blocks other options had ceased. Moreover, she made an uncalled-for comment about Americans wanting their way, and left the room again. While she was gone, I had three contractions while lying on my back. For each of those contractions, the heart monitor showed a late deceleration. Jamie asked a nurse to start IV fluids and I was given oxygen. At that point, Dr. Rezvina examined my cervix, said that I was not complete, and left the room.

She returned with the consent form to perform the c-section. She said if I did not sign it, she would bring in whatever legal people she needed to force me to have the c-section.

She said that my older child, Jane, has feeding issues requiring an NG tube.

She said she was not there for Jane's birth, so she did not know what happened then. She did not want to let the same thing happen to this baby.

Jane's feeding disorder has nothing to do with her birth.

Jane was born vaginally.

Dr. Rezvina delivered Jane on December 4, 2010.

I signed the consent for c-section. While being prepped, I asked for a double layer of stitches, because it was my understanding that two layers is part of the criteria for a VBAC later. It has since been explained to me that there is no such thing and I did not know what I was talking about, but at the time, on the operating table, I was just trying to ensure that I could have future babies vaginally. From the other side of the drape, Dr. Rezvina began to lecture me about VBACs, but quite frankly at that point I had stopped listening to her and was trying to be present for the birth of my son.

As she was closing me back up, she asked whether I had any other special things I wanted - "staples, sutures, glue" - as there were five layers that needed closing and I "obviously had opinions." My husband heard this, and I saw him turn around when she said that, but he refrained from confronting the woman who had her hands inside his wife's abdomen at that moment. Again, Dr. Rezvina's attitude was borderline abusive, because I dared to be an active participant in my own health, rather than a mindless piece of baby-incubating meat for her to deal with before the end of the day, (also, it did not go unnoticed that my surgery was over before 5 p.m. and she disappeared after I left the operating room - I will give her the benefit of the doubt that the timing was a coincidence). Overall, her behavior was an unprofessional embarrassment to both Somers Manor and Shore Memorial.

I wrote this letter because when we spoke, I got a sense from you that I am not the only patient to have a problem with Dr. Rezvina. In fact, I know other mothers who have had a similar experience with her. I know you are aware of her issues and yet she continues to railroad patients rather than counsel and work with them.

I had my first baby vaginally, and I loved the whole experience. I hired a doula for both births, researched pain management options and have a husband who fully supports me. Feeling Jane leave

my body and plopped on my stomach, holding her right away, counting ten fingers and ten toes, were all moments that I cherish. I had spent this whole pregnancy looking forward to the moment I met my baby, to the rush of love and relief, to kiss him and hand him to his daddy for the first time. Instead, I associate his birth with being berated, intimidated, and subjected to Dr. Rezvina's ego. I have to take care of a toddler and newborn after major abdominal surgery, and carry an unexpected scar for the rest of my life. For mothers whose c-sections are not surrounded by hostility, maybe the scar represents the special way their child arrived. For me, it's a reminder that Dr. Rezvina took control of my body and manipulated my emotions on what should have been one of the happiest days of my life. I will never get my first moments with Cole back.

As I said when we spoke, I have perspective. I have a beautiful, healthy son. Doctors have an obligation to ensure the health of mothers and babies during an intense and medically- complicated time. Medical advancements like cesarean sections are wonderful tools that have saved lives, and I understand that, maybe, a c-section rather than resuscitative measures would have been the only option for safely getting my son here. Even if the c-section had to happen, Dr. Rezvina's repulsive attitude did not. This was one day, and Cole and I will go on to have many wonderful days together. My purpose in writing this letter is to make you and your practice aware that her behavior is not being overlooked and forgotten once the baby is here. I hope you will address this matter before another patient has the joy of birth of her child clouded by unnecessary threats, difficulty, and heartbreak.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or concerns.

Very truly yours,

Lindsay Switzer

cc. Ron Johnson (via regular mail)