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Medicaid fraud alleged

BY RACHEL HONAHAN

CONEY ISLAND adult home resident Norman Bloomfield became suspicious when he got scheduled for physical therapy even though he didn't need it.

Bloomfield, 58, who lives at Surf Manor, asked his primary doctor why Brooklyn Community Management, a clinic that provided care to residents, made the therapy appointment.

"It has to do with Medicaid fees," he recently remembered his doctor telling him.

Bloomfield and other residents at Surf Manor have asked the state Health Dept. to investigate the home and the clinic for possible Medicaid fraud.

Bloomfield said that in one outrageous example of potential Medicaid overbilling was a Surf Manor resident who had five appointments to have ear wax removed — by a pediatrician.

Despite the repeated visits, the doctor only managed to clean one ear:

Scheduling of appointments raised suspicions too: Residents "report simply receiving appointment cards under their door" without requesting to see a doctor, according to a letter by MFY Legal Services lawyer Erik Grafe to state officials. Bloomfield was scheduled for an

EKG just a month after his primary care doctor had done one, he said.

When he asked for a reason, Bloomfield said he was told all residents were given an EKG every six months. "They didn't care," he said.

Appointments were often "switched" to "doctors in completely unrelated specialty fields" — in one case from a podiatrist to an ophthalmologist, Grafe wrote.

Doctors were also scheduled to see many patients at one time.

A podiatrist was slated to see 40 different residents at 3:30 p.m. one day last April.

These practices, at the very least,

Patients urge probe of clinic

raise "questions about the quality of care being provided," Grafe wrote. BCM clinic lawyer Jerry Levy defended his client.

"I can't imagine there's any real credence to any of it, because we haven't been contacted by the state," he said.

"If there are problems, we'll straighten it out," he added.

Surf Manor lawyer Jeffrey Sherrin said the clinic was at fault. "The adult home has no control over what medical services are ordered or other health care service are provided on doctor's orders."

The Medicaid fraud units of both the Health Dept. and the state attorney general's office would not comment on whether they are investigating the charges.