

Complaint Filed with DOT

Case Number: CL2017100041

Consumer Information

Inquirer Type: AA

Name: MS NIELTJE GEDNEY

Address: PO BOX 281 KEARNEYSVILLE WV 25430

E-mail Address: NGEDNEY@HOMEDIALYZORSUNITED.ORG

Office Phone: 304-279-3192

Home Phone: 304-279-3192

Complaints Information

Complaint Code: MU0600

Carrier Name: UNITED AIRLINES

Flight Date: 10/02/2017

Flight Itinerary: IAD-LAX UA 2111

Description of Problem/Inquiry

I am a dialyzer who must travel with my medically assistive Device. As always, I contacted the UAL Disabilities desk at least 2 weeks in advance, spoke with Christine in Houston (all the info they would release). I requested a wheelchair, and informed her I would have 100lb dialysis machine, 1 suitcase of associated medical equipment (both at n/c) and 1 personal luggage. At check in, there was no mention in the record, I was kept standing at the counter for 45 minutes or more, the CRO did not know what to do, and despite 3 requests, they would not provide a wheelchair for me to sit in during this wait. This is the 3rd time this has happened on United, and so I am filing a complaint.

From: CustomerCare@united.com [mailto:customerCare@united.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 3:21 PM
To: NGEDNEY@HOMEDIALYZORSUNITED.ORG
Subject: United Airlines Case ID 13073938 (KMM48301177V70736L0KM)

Dear Ms. Gedney:

I am responding to the complaint you filed with the U.S. Department of Transportation. I'm sorry our service disappointed you on October 2 when you checked in at Washington/Dulles airport for Flight 2111 to Los Angeles.

Complaints regarding the service we provide our customers with special needs are taken very seriously. We are reviewing your concerns with the the locations involved and have asked for their reports. This process can take up to 30 days, however, we are usually able to complete our internal investigation and and respond earlier. I will be back in touch with you as soon as possible.

In the meantime, thank you for your patience. Your comments are important to us, and we want to ensure they are properly addressed.

Regards,

Faith A. Liedberg
Complaint Resolution Official (CRO)
DOT/Disability Specialist – Corporate Customer Care
Case: 13073938

United Airlines is committed to making air travel safe, accessible, and comfortable for our passengers with disabilities. Customers may also contact the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). It's important to note that DOT involvement does not determine nor influence the issuance of personal compensation by an airline.

From: CustomerCare@united.com [mailto:customer@united.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 09, 2017 6:30 PM
To: NGEDNEY@HOMEDIALYZORSUNITED.ORG
Subject: Re: United Airlines Case ID 13073938 (KMM48823094V79718L0KM)

Dear Mrs. Gedney:

Thank you for your patience while we investigated your complaint filed with the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Your email was forwarded to our Washington airport manager for review with our employees and our wheelchair service vendor, and I have received their reports regarding the issues you raised. Please know the information I share is not intended to dispute your recollection of the events or negate your point of view. However, federal regulations require that we respond in a dispositive format and advise you whether or not a violation of federal disability regulations occurred.

I apologize we left you with a poor impression of our service on October 2. You should always receive courteous, helpful and professional service when you fly with us. While I understand your unhappiness with the service you received and appreciate your feelings that your check-in could have been handled in a better manner, I must respectfully deny a violation of Part 382 of the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) occurred as your assistive device and medical supplies were accepted for transport free of charge, a CRO was called to assist when a disability-related concern arose, our CRO reviewed our policy to ensure your concern was handled correctly per United policy and ACAA regulations, and then waived all bag fees including the fee applicable for your regular baggage. We also show you checked in for Flight 2111 at 10:34 a.m. and our wheelchair service vendor verified a wheelchair attendant picked you up in the lobby at 10:38 a.m., took you through security and you arrived at Gate D11 at 11:10 a.m. and boarded at 12:04 p.m. for the 12:40 p.m. departure. I'm sorry if it seemed like you waited longer after your request for wheelchair assistance was received. Please know wheelchair assistance cannot be requested in advance for the originating airport. If you need mobility assistance at the originating airport, please self-identify as disabled to airport staff when you arrive and request the level of mobility assistance you require at that time.

For your future travel planning, please allow me to clarify that it's not necessary to call our Accessibility Desk in advance to travel with your dialysis machine and have the baggage fees

waived; no advance notice is needed. United will transport medical and assistive devices free of charge and waive the checked baggage fees when these items are packed separately and the bag containing the medical or assistive device(s), and/or supplies, does not also contain clothing, toiletries or other ordinary personal travel items. Your reservation does not need to be documented beforehand that you'll have a medical or assistive device and you can request a bag fee waiver when you present your medical or assistive device at check-in time. Airport check-in staff will need to make visual inspection of the item(s) or contents of the bag in order to waive the bag fee for an assistive and/or medical device(s). As the collection of baggage fees is a function of airport staff, reservations agents and other representatives cannot waive baggage fees over the phone. I hope this information will be helpful when traveling with us in the future.

United is committed to ensuring all of our customers have equal access to the same facilities and services. As you are aware, every airport has Complaint Resolution Officials (CRO) who are trained to resolve service issues for customers with special needs. Please ask for a CRO if you have a disability-related concern or need assistance.

We're listening to our customers, now more than ever, and working hard to be your airline of choice. We value your candid feedback as your satisfaction is important to us. If you have other questions or comments, please contact me directly at 847-427-6744.

All of us at United appreciate you are a MileagePlus member, Mrs. Gedney. It's never our intention to inconvenience or upset you, and I apologize we let you down. As part of our apology, I'm sending you an Electronic Travel Certificate to use toward future travel with us. The certificate will arrive in a separate email within a few days. We look forward to welcoming you aboard again soon and trust your next trip with United will earn an entirely favorable review.

Sincerely,

Faith A. Liedberg
Complaint Resolution Official (CRO)
DOT/Disability Specialist – Corporate Customer Care
Case: 13073938

From: ngedney@homedialyzorsunited.org
To: "CustomerCare@united.com" <customer@united.com>
Subject: RE: United Airlines Case ID 13073938 (KMM48823094V79718L0KM)
Date: November 10, 2017 5:04:12 PM CST

Faith, thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns about sensitivity training for the CSR's at the Special Accommodations desk at IAD. In addition, as we discussed, I am adding some links for you to pass on to your family, who are also dealing with ESRD. These groups literally saved my life.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nxstageusers/>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HomeDialysisCentral/>
www.homedialyzorsunited.org[homedialyzorsunited.org]

www.homedialysis.org

Best to you and your family,

Nieltje Gedney
PO Box 281
Kearneysville WV 25430
304.279.3192

From: CustomerCare@united.com [mailto:customer@united.com]
Sent: Friday, November 10, 2017 7:54 PM
To: NGEDNEY@HOMEDIALYZORSUNITED.ORG
Subject: RE: United Airlines Case ID 13073938 > 13199016 (KMM48959660V61599L0KM)

Hello Mrs. Gedney:

Thank you so much for taking time to talk with me earlier. I truly appreciate your point of view and want to assure you, we take your comments seriously and we'll do our best to see that your future interactions with our Washington/Dulles staff go much better. It's so important that we hear from our customers so we can take corrective action. So again, let me apologize and thank you for bringing your experiences to our attention.

Please also know that I've passed along your compliments for Jose, at New Orleans, and Missy, on our Accessibility Desk, so they can be recognized. I know Jose and Missy and their supervisors will be pleased to hear how much you appreciated them for the service they provided you.

As I mentioned, I also received your second DOT complaint. I was so sorry to hear that you had the same issue again. I've submitted another investigation request to our Washington/Dulles manager, and will be back in touch with you on that as soon as possible.

Thank you so much for providing the website links about home dialysis. I've looked over some of the information already and am anxious to share with my brother and sister. What you told me on the phone was very encouraging.

Your satisfaction matters to us, Mrs. Gedney. I'll be back to you soon about the October 30 service issues and please don't hesitate to contact me directly if I can be of further assistance.

Kindest regards,

Faith A. Liedberg
Complaint Resolution Official (CRO)
DOT/Disability Specialist – Corporate Customer Care
Case: 13199016