

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER



DUSTIN SAFRANEK/AP

A Holland America cruise ship in Ketchikan, Alaska, in 2021.

Medical records from Holland America are mysteriously held up

By Christopher Elliott
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Q. I was on a one-week cruise from Seattle to Alaska on the Holland America MS Westerdam last year. I came down with COVID two days before the cruise ended. I received excellent care from the medical team on board. When I got home, I saw that I had been charged \$750 for the Paxlovid treatment I received. I contacted my insurance company, and a representative said that I needed to submit my medical records from the cruise.

Holland America told me that I needed to fill out a release form and send it to MRecordsRequests@Carnival.com, which I did. I have sent it multiple times and never gotten a response; therefore, I can't collect the \$750 from my insurance company.

Can you help me get my medical records from Holland America?

DAVID ARONSTEIN, *Jamaica Plain*

A. I'm sorry that your cruise ended with you confined to quarters with COVID. That's no fun. But I'm happy to hear the Holland America crew took care of you. This care should have extended to your follow-up when you asked for your medical records.

But wait a minute. Holland America should have provided you with medical records at the time of your treatment — and if not then, when you paid for the medical service.

Your case is an important reminder to collect all medical records immediately after you've seen a doctor on board. You'll need them to file an insurance claim. Insurance companies have to see your medical records and a bill in writing if you have any hope of getting refunded. I've seen too many travel insurance claims that went nowhere because of insufficient records. Don't let that happen to you. (But don't worry, you're in good hands with my advocacy team!)

It appears that all record requests are handled through Holland America's parent company, Carnival. Carnival also has a page on its site that allows you to submit questions after your cruise, although it's unclear if this applies to Holland America customers. It looks like you also tried to call Holland America. Calling would be less helpful; you were right to keep everything in writing.

You were more than patient with Holland America. You waited 10 months before contacting me and my advocacy team, which is about 9 months longer than I would have waited. You could have enlisted the help of your travel adviser to get the documents. If that didn't work, you also could have reached out to one of the Holland America executives I list on my consumer advocacy site, Elliott.org.

I contacted Holland America on your behalf. Within a few hours, it sent the records that you had requested.

Christopher Elliott is the founder of Elliott Advocacy (elliottadvocacy.org), a nonprofit organization that helps consumers solve their problems. Email him at chris@elliott.org or get help by contacting him at elliottadvocacy.org/help.

THE VIP LOUNGE

Jacqui Heinrich

Count her out until after the election, but then bring on the French Riviera and N.E. coast

Jacqui Heinrich knows a thing or two about travel. As a White House correspondent for Fox News, she has traveled the world — 17 countries in all, including in Asia and Europe — as a member of the media on Air Force One with President Biden. The Massachusetts native, who was raised in Cumberland, Maine, may live in Washington, D.C., but she said that New England will always be home. "I was just back [in Maine] this weekend for my mom's birthday and went to Scarborough Beach ... and the weekend before that I went to the Vineyard," Heinrich, 35, said during a recent phone call from Washington. "But my dad lives in Gilford, N.H., so when I go home, that's where I go the most." Recently promoted to senior White House correspondent at Fox News, Heinrich said that with the upcoming Democratic National Convention in August and the election in November, she knows that a vacation isn't in the cards for her in the foreseeable future. "I figure I'm probably going to be working straight through January again," she said, referencing the last presidential election she covered. "But who knows? Maybe it will be a decisive victory — on either side — and there won't be any recounts or anything." Heinrich, who joined the network in 2018 as a general assignment reporter based in New York City, said she has already told family members to "count me out" of all family events in the coming months. "And if I can make it," she said, "it will be a happy surprise." We caught up with Heinrich to talk about all things travel.

If you could travel anywhere right now, where would you go? I've always dreamed of eating my way through the French Riviera and Provence, with sun-drenched days at the lavender fields punctuated by crisp wines and salty butter. That kind of trip is not possible with my schedule in an election year, but coastal New England checks most of the same boxes. I'm so excited to get back home next month and escape the humid throes of D.C. summer.

Do you prefer booking trips through a travel agent or on your own? I typically only use agencies for tours and activities when traveling abroad — and I try to avoid big spending up front unless I'm dealing with a reputable company. A few years ago in Cuba, I used a great local agency for a day trip from Havana to the tobacco fields of Viñales. Often hotels will offer recommendations for guides.

Thoughts on an "unplugged" vacation? Nice in theory, but with my job it's daunting to be out of the loop for too long — I hate returning to a mountain of emails. I'll fully unplug for hours, not days. I do appreciate a no-phones dinner, though.

What has been your worst vacation experience? Last year I booked a rental car in Ireland and forgot to reserve automatic transmission. I spent seven days white-knuckling the windy countryside, driving on the left side of the road with a stick shift. I will never make that mistake again.



Jacqui Heinrich with her father, Robert Heinrich, last summer on Lake Winnepesaukee.

What is your favorite childhood travel memory?

I loved camping in the White Mountains of New Hampshire in the summers as a kid — there's nothing better than ending a day of kayaking with a campfire.

Do you vacation to relax, to learn, or for the adventure of it all? My ideal vacation involves some activity and some zen. I love getting outdoors for a day of fishing, hiking, kayaking, bicycling, skiing, or snowboarding — then ending the trip at the spa.

What book do you plan on bringing with you to read on your next vacation? I'd probably sound smarter if I told you I love nonfiction, but the truth is, I'd prefer a thrilling murder mystery, a magazine, or a cookbook. I read enough heavy content in my day job.

If you could travel with one famous person/celebrity, who would it be? David Attenborough, the narrator of "Planet Earth" — for his wisdom, wonder, and iconic voice. How cool would that be?

What is the best gift to give a traveler? Portable battery packs for cellphones: easy to carry a few fully charged spares, and handy when outlets aren't readi-

ly accessible.

What is your go-to snack for a flight or a road trip? Trader Joe's peanut butter-filled pretzels. Just enough protein to hold you over and satisfies the salty-crunchy craving.

What is the coolest souvenir you've picked up on a vacation? I picked up a giant brass dragon in Indonesia — a real conversation starter. Most airlines will check odd shapes if they are packed safely. Getting the dragon home involved a lot of bubble wrap, tape, and cardboard.

What is your favorite app/website for travel? I always consult the Michelin Guide for restaurants — but if you find yourself near a US Embassy abroad, often staffers will have great tips and recommendations.

What has travel taught you? People are more similar than different — and a smile is universal.

What is your best travel tip? I always pack a lightweight expandable duffel bag inside my suitcase. If I end up with an overweight bag, it's usually cheaper to check a second bag than pay the fee.

JULIET PENNINGTON



HERE

CAMPING THREE WAYS, PLUS WATER FUN GALORE

Toss the kids and your bathing suits in the car and head to Jellystone Park Cranberry Acres. Located an hour south of Boston in Carver, the camp-resort celebrates its first fully operational season after two years of major renovations, including a 21,000 square-foot water park with a multi-level water playground, two 165-foot waterslides, splash pad, 750-gallon hydrostorm bucket (that periodically dumps water on anyone standing beneath), and activity pool. The former RV-only campground now lets you vacation in one of three ways: stay in your own RV in one of the resort's spacious campsites; reserve a tent site for a rustic camping experience; or choose one of 153 luxury cabins with private bathroom, bedroom, screened-in porch, full kitchen, linen rentals (if you choose to not pack your own) and AC/heat.

Additionally, the newly expanded campground features a new pizza kitchen, camp store, playground, sports courts for basketball, and volleyball, gem-mining sluice, and renovated attractions like the mini-golf course and arcade. Nature lovers will appreciate kayak rentals at Ben's Pond and the property's walking trails. En-

joy burgers, wings, tacos, and more at the Campfire Canteen food truck. More than 20 flavors of ice cream and toppings will keep you cool and energized at Twistee Treat. Plan ahead: Halloween, celebrated every weekend from Sept. 20 through Oct. 27, features costume contests, trick or treating, adult and young children's haunted houses, a pumpkin patch, and more. August nightly rates: Glamping pods \$241; Cottages and bungalows from \$334; RV and tent sites from \$128. cranberryacresjellystonepark.com

THERE

BOUTIQUE OASIS BLOOMS IN PHILLY'S FISHTOWN

Philadelphia's eclectic Fishtown neighborhood welcomes the hotel An-

na & Bel into its creative music, art, and culinary community scene. Opening its doors Aug. 7, the 50-key property was once a grand 18th-century mansion that subsequently housed a spectrum of institutions, from a women's asylum to a neighborhood retirement home. Today, the historic structure has been lovingly restored and reimagined as an homage to the women that once lived within its walls, spotlighting fine arts and crafts by local and international female artists. Upon entry, guests are greeted by the original grand staircase with ornate detailing, and faded black-and-white checkerboard floor tiles that play into the hotel's vintage aesthetic.

Accommodations vary in size from studios to two-bedroom living spaces, all outfitted with luxe Bellino linens, Frette terry towels, organic cotton robes, and Le Labo bath amenities. Modern bathrooms sport custom tiles and marble vanities with stone sourced from Turkey. Each room features either a sleek kitchenette hidden within a locally-crafted wooden pantry or a well-stocked minibar with Nespresso machine and electric kettle.

The guest-exclusive courtyard is anchored by a heated outdoor plunge pool lined by flowering crape myrtle trees and umbrella-shaded loungers. Poolside cocktails and Mediterranean-inspired snacks evoke a coastal retreat while the just-opened Bastia offers a dinner menu featuring cuisines of Corsica, Sardinia, and other islands of the western Mediterranean. Additional amenities include a private room



EVERYWHERE

where guests can book wellness treatments from a list of local practitioners; lower-level fitness center featuring an infrared sauna; and second-floor yoga and meditation deck. Rates from \$300. 866-959-5428, www.annaandbel.com

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