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SC Court of Appeals

**THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE COURT OF APPEALS**

Appeal from Charleston County
Court of Common Pleas

Jennifer B. McCoy, Circuit Court Judge

Case No. 2024-CP-10-03732
Appellate Case No. 2025-000237

Joe Bryan,

Respondent,

v.

THI of South Carolina at Charleston, LLC
d/b/a Riverside Health and Rehab,

Appellant.

INITIAL REPLY BRIEF OF APPELLANT

CLEMENT RIVERS, LLP
Stephen L. Brown (SC Bar No. 66468)
D. Jay Davis Jr. (SC Bar No. 12084)
James D. Gandy III (SC Bar No. 11925)
T. Ashton Phillips III (SC Bar No. 104227)
Russell G. Hines (SC Bar No. 72100)
25 Calhoun Street, Suite 400
P.O. Box 993 (29402)
Charleston, South Carolina 29401
(843) 720-5488

Attorneys for Appellant

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The Facility makes these points in reply to Mr. Bryan’s brief.¹

ARGUMENT IN REPLY

1. The unpublished opinions Mr. Bryan cites have no precedential value.

Citing a litany of unpublished opinions, Mr. Bryan urges the Court to “re-affirm what it . . . ha[s] already conclusively determined on at least twenty (20) occasions since April 2022 and deny the instant Appeal.” (Mr. Bryan’s Br. p. 10 (internal footnote omitted).) These unpublished decisions have no precedential value and, indeed, should not even be cited in this proceeding. Rule 268(d)(2), SCACR (providing that unpublished opinions “have no precedential value and should not be cited except in proceedings in which they are directly involved”).

2. Mr. Bryan’s reliance on *Solesbee*² is already amply refuted in the Facility’s principal brief.

Despite criticizing the Facility’s principal brief as “largely premised on the Circuit Court’s supposed reliance on *Solesbee* . . . ,”³ the essence of Mr. Bryan’s argument for affirmance of the circuit court’s finding against merger of the Admission Agreement and the Arbitration Agreement is simply to parrot the

¹ Shorthand references already defined in the Facility’s principal brief are continued in this reply brief (e.g., the “Facility” refers to Defendant/Appellant, THI of South Carolina at Charleston, LLC d/b/a Riverside Health and Rehab, and “Mr. Bryan” refers to Plaintiff/Respondent, Joe Bryan).

² *Solesbee v. Fundamental Clinical and Operational Services, LLC*, 438 S.C. 638, 885 S.E.2d 144 (Ct. App. 2023).

³ (Mr. Bryan’s Br. p. 11.)

Solesbee Court’s analysis. (Mr. Bryan’s Br. pp. 13–14.)⁴ As already amply explained in the Facility’s principal brief, however, the *Solesbee* Court (a) erred as to those aspects of the merger argument that it addressed and (b), in any event, did not actually address all material aspects of the argument, leaving gaps in the *Solesbee* decision through which the Facility’s position still fits. (Initial Brief of Appellant pp. 19–28.) Mr. Bryan’s brief does nothing to close these gaps.

3. Mr. Bryan’s argument against the applicability of direct benefits estoppel is already amply refuted in the Facility’s principal brief.

Mr. Bryan contends direct benefits estoppel does not apply simply because he is not asserting a claim that relies on contract terms to impose liability. (Mr. Bryan’s Br. pp. 14–15.) As already amply explained in the Facility’s principal brief, however, this argument is unavailing. (Initial Brief of Appellant pp. 28–32.)

⁴ The Facility would note that, contrary to Mr. Bryan’s assertion that it was not mentioned (Mr. Bryan’s Br. p. 11), *Solesbee* was indeed addressed during the hearing on the Motion to Compel Arbitration. (Motion Hr’g Tr. pp. 5:13–13:1.) Additionally, while it is true that the circuit court’s orders do not reference *Solesbee*, the circuit court’s order denying the Motion to Compel Arbitration cites the authorities primarily relied upon by the *Solesbee* Court (*compare* Order filed 12/13/24 pp. 3–4 (citing *Coleman v. Mariner Health Care, Inc.*, 407 S.C. 346, 755 S.E.2d 450 (2014) and *Hodge v. UniHealth Post-Acute Care of Bamberg, LLC*, 422 S.C. 544, 813 S.E.2d 292 (Ct. App. 2018)) *with Solesbee*, 438 S.C. at 649, 885 S.E.2d at 149 (“Thus, like the *Coleman* and *Hodge* courts, we find there was no merger in this case and Magnolia’s equitable estoppel argument was properly denied.”).) And in any event, the very fact that *Solesbee* exists—i.e., the very fact that precedent exists that Mr. Bryan himself contends should control the disposition of this case—naturally calls for the Facility to argue that it should not.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing additional reasons, the Facility asks that the Court reverse the circuit court's denial of the Motion to Compel Arbitration and compel Mr. Bryan's claims against the Facility to arbitration (or to remand this matter to the circuit court with instructions that it do so).

Respectfully submitted,
CLEMENT RIVERS, LLP

By: s/Russell G. Hines
Stephen L. Brown (SC Bar No. 66468)
D. Jay Davis, Jr. (SC Bar No. 12084)
James D. Gandy III (SC Bar No. 11925)
Russell G. Hines (SC Bar No. 72100)
25 Calhoun Street, Suite 400
P.O. Box 993 (29402)
Charleston, South Carolina 29401
(843) 720-5488
Attorneys for Appellant

Charleston, South Carolina

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PROOF OF SERVICE

CLEMENT RIVERS, LLP
Stephen L. Brown (SC Bar No. 66468)
D. Jay Davis Jr. (SC Bar No. 12084)
James D. Gandy III (SC Bar No. 11925)
T. Ashton Phillips III (SC Bar No. 104227)
Russell G. Hines (SC Bar No. 72100)
25 Calhoun Street, Suite 400
P.O. Box 993 (29402)
Charleston, South Carolina 29401
(843) 720-5488

Attorneys for Appellant

I, Russell G. Hines, of Clement Rivers, LLP, attorneys for Appellant, hereby certify that the **INITIAL REPLY BRIEF OF APPELLANT** was served on Respondent on December 12, 2025, by emailing (see attached email) a copy of the same to Respondent's counsel of record:

Samuel R. Clawson Jr., Esquire
sam@cfulaw.com
Christy R. Fagnoli, Esquire
christy@cfulaw.com
Bert G. Utsey III, Esquire
bert@cfulaw.com
Laura K. Wilkes-D'Amato, Esquire
laura@cfulaw.com
CLAWSON FARGNOLI UTSEY, LLC
Attorneys for Respondent

Respectfully submitted,
CLEMENT RIVERS, LLP

By: s/Russell G. Hines
Russell G. Hines (SC Bar No. 72100)
Attorneys for Appellant

Charleston, South Carolina

December 12, 2025

Hines, Russell

From: Hines, Russell
Sent: Friday, December 12, 2025 10:46 PM
To: 'sam@cfulaw.com'; 'Christy Fagnoli'; 'bert@cfulaw.com'; 'Laura Wilkes-D'Amato'
Cc: Brown, Stephen L.; Davis, Jay; Gandy, III, James D. (Tripp); Phillips, Ashton; Justman, Aimee; Peterson, Susan
Subject: Bryan v. THI (2025-00237) -- Initial Reply Brief of Appellant
Attachments: Bryan v. THI (2025-000237) -- Initial Reply Brief of Appellant.pdf

Attached for service in the above-referenced matter please find the **Initial Reply Brief of Appellant**.

Russell G. Hines
CLEMENT RIVERS, LLP
www.ycrlaw.com
25 Calhoun Street, Suite 400
Charleston, South Carolina 29401
P.O. Box 993 (29402)
Phone: (843) 720-5488
Fax: (843) 579-1327
Email: rhines@ycrlaw.com



CLEMENT RIVERS, LLP

25 Calhoun Street • Suite 400 • Charleston, SC 29401
ycrlaw.com