

Trump Admin Tells University to Stop Forcing Nurses to Assist Abortions Against Their Will

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The Trump administration is telling a university to stop forcing a nurse to assist abortions against her will.

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Today the Office of Civil Rights of the US Department of Health & Human Services responded to a complaint that pro life attorneys from the American Center for Law and Justice filed on behalf of a Vermont nurse who is forced into participating in an abortion that went against her deeply held religious beliefs because she opposes killing unborn children.

In the Complaint, ACLJ alleged that its client, an operating room nurse at the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMCC) in Burlington, was coerced into assisting in an abortion in 2017 even though her name was on a list of nurses who, for religious or moral reasons, were conscientiously opposed to assisting abortions and even though other non-objecting nurses were available who could easily have taken her place.

“In the more than two decades of work that ACLJ has done to defend the rights of conscience of pro-life health care workers, this is by far the most outrageous case we’ve ever seen. Our client’s most fundamental beliefs about the sanctity of life were simply brushed aside,” said ACLJ lead attorney Jay Sekulow.

“Worse, her superiors deliberately misled her into thinking she was assisting in a procedure following a miscarriage. But once trapped inside the OR she discovered that it was, in fact, an elective abortion and that this had been known all along by her superiors who then callously refused to relieve her. To say that she was emotionally traumatized by this event is putting it mildly,” he continued.

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Other nurses have also been forced to assist in killing babies in abortions.

“At least four other nurses at UVMMC have confirmed that they too have been subjected to similar violations of their conscience rights. We forwarded them to OCR as part of our Complaint. And after conducting its own thorough investigation of the matter, OCR has substantiated their allegations,” Sekulow said.

Today, the Trump administration announced that UVMMC has committed violations of the federal Church Amendment – the federal “conscience clause” protecting pro-life medical workers. The law prohibits entities that receive federal funding from discriminating against employees who refuse to perform or assist in the performance of abortions because of their moral or religious beliefs.

“OCR also found that UVMMC has discriminatory policies that assign or require employees to assist abortion procedures even after they have recorded their religious or moral objections to assisting in the performance of such abortions. OCR’s Notice of Violation letter asks UVMMC to conform its policies to the Church Amendments and take other corrective action, or face potential action by the HHS component from which UVMMC has received federal funding,” it said in a Notice of Violation to University of Vermont.

Roger Severino, Director of OCR said, “Forcing medical staff to assist in the taking of human life inflicts a moral injury on them that is not only unnecessary and wrong, it violates longstanding federal law. Our investigation has uncovered serious discrimination by UVMMC against nurses and staff who cannot, in good conscience, assist in elective abortions.”

Severino concluded, “We stand ready to assist UVMMC in changing its policies and procedures to respect conscience rights and remedy the effects of its discrimination.”

HHS has given UVMMC 30 days to come up with a policy that will ensure that the University of Vermont Medical Center never forces nurses to participate in abortions again. If they fail to cooperate, they lose their federal funding.

“This action by HHS is an enormous step forward toward the full protection of conscience rights of all those in the health care field who recognize the sanctity of all human life. The repercussions of today’s action will be felt in every hospital and health care system in the country,” Sekulow said. “No longer should pro-life health care professionals have to fear that their values – the values of protecting, not, destroying, life – make them somehow unfit or unsuitable for the healing profession. No nurses, doctors, or other health workers should ever be deliberately trapped in a room and forced to participate in something that their employer knows those workers consider abhorrent at the core of their being.”