



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

05-23-2024

Columbia River Healthcare to Settle EEOC Harassment Charge

Federal Investigation Found Gender Non-Conforming Supervisor Was Subjected to Intentional Misgendering by Management and Staff

SEATTLE – Columbia River Healthcare Inc., a nursing facility in Vancouver, Washington, that operates under the name The Oaks at Timberline, has agreed to provide monetary and injunctive relief to a former supervisor following an investigation by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today.

In a charge filed with EEOC, the former supervisor alleged that after disclosing their gender identity and pronouns to their employer, managers and staff persisted in repeatedly and intentionally referring to them using pronouns inconsistent with their gender identity. The EEOC's investigation found evidence confirming that the alleged sex-based harassment went on for more than a six-month period and that, despite receiving complaints about and objections to the harassment, Columbia River Healthcare failed to act appropriately. Such alleged conduct is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination and harassment based on sex, including gender identity.

Following the investigation, the parties engaged in the pre-litigation conciliation

process which resulted in a settlement that required Columbia River Healthcare to pay monetary damages, revise its non-discrimination policies, conduct employee training, and provide additional training to managers and staff involved in the investigation of employee complaints of discrimination and harassment.

“Accidental slip-ups may happen, but repeatedly and intentionally misgendering someone is a clear form of sex-based harassment,” said Elizabeth M. Cannon, director of the EEOC’s Seattle Field Office. “Employers have a duty to intervene when employees—including transgender, non-binary, and other gender non-conforming individuals—are treated maliciously in the workplace because of their gender identity. Training can be a powerful tool for informing employees of their rights and proactively preventing harassment.”

For information about harassment, including EEOC’s updated guidance on harassment, visit: https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-harassment-workplace#_Toc164808005 (https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-harassment-workplace#_Toc164808005).

For more information on sex-based discrimination, please visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination>).

The EEOC’s Seattle Field Office has jurisdiction over Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov (<http://www.eeoc.gov>). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our [email updates](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new) (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>).

Recent Press Releases from the Seattle Field Office

[Washington State Department of Transportation Settles Disability Discrimination Complaint Filed With EEOC](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/washington-state-department-transportation-settles-disability-discrimination-complaint) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/washington-state-department-transportation-settles-disability-discrimination-complaint>)

[NorVal Electric to Pay \\$50,000 in EEOC Sexual Harassment and Retaliation](#)

[Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/norval-electric-pay-50000-eeoc-sexual-harassment-and-retaliation-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/norval-electric-pay-50000-eeoc-sexual-harassment-and-retaliation-lawsuit)

[Red Robin Pagará 600.000 Dólares a la EEOC por Demanda por Acoso Sexual \(https://www.eeoc.gov/es/newsroom/red-robin-pagara-600000-dolares-la-eeoc-por-demanda-por-acoso-sexual\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/es/newsroom/red-robin-pagara-600000-dolares-la-eeoc-por-demanda-por-acoso-sexual)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Retaliation, Sexual Harassment, Harassment

[Amerigo Italian Restaurant Owner Companies Pay \\$60,000 in EEOC Discrimination Suit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/amerigo-italian-restaurant-owner-companies-pay-60000-eeoc-discrimination-suit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/amerigo-italian-restaurant-owner-companies-pay-60000-eeoc-discrimination-suit)

[EEOC Releases Workplace Guidance to Prevent Harassment \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-releases-workplace-guidance-prevent-harassment\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-releases-workplace-guidance-prevent-harassment)

[ADT Pizza to Pay \\$15,000 to Settle EEOC Disability Discrimination and Harassment Charge \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/adt-pizza-pay-15000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-and-harassment-charge\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/adt-pizza-pay-15000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-and-harassment-charge)