



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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Healthcare Services Group to Settle EEOC National Origin Discrimination Charge

Federal Investigation Found Housekeeping Company Restricted Employees from Speaking Spanish

SAN FRANCISCO – Healthcare Services Group, Inc., which provides housekeeping and other services to healthcare facilities and employees 35,000 employees in 48 states, agreed to provide monetary and injunctive relief to an employee following an investigation by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today.

In a charge filed with EEOC, a woman employed as a “light housekeeper” at a nursing home facility in Concord, California, alleged that Healthcare Services Group prohibited her from speaking her native language of Spanish while in the workplace. The EEOC’s investigation found evidence confirming that her employer maintained a limited “English-only” rule. If applied at all times in the workplace or unless justified by business necessity, this type of policy violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on national origin.

After the investigation, the parties engaged in a pre-litigation conciliation process resulting in a settlement. Healthcare Services Group will pay monetary damages to the housekeeper and will provide training for all California employees as well as

separate training for all California managers and human resources personnel. The company also agreed to revise its California policies and procedures to include a clear statement that Healthcare Services Group will not restrict languages spoken by employees not performing patient care, and that employees have the right to speak their preferred language in the workplace. These policies will be issued in English, Spanish and any other language spoken by 5% or more of its California workforce. In addition, the company agreed to remove English fluency requirements from the light housekeeper job description, and to post a notice of the agreement for a period of two years.

“Restrictive language policies are only allowed if they are required to ensure safe or efficient business operation and is put in place for nondiscriminatory reasons. Client relations and customer preference do not justify discriminatory policies,” said Rosa Salazar, acting director of the EEOC’s Oakland Local Office. “We commend Healthcare Services Group for making important changes in their policies and training their entire California workforce to recognize and prevent this form of national origin discrimination.”

For more information on national origin discrimination, please visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/national-origin-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/national-origin-discrimination>). For related resources for small businesses, please visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/small-business-fact-sheet-national-origin-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/small-business-fact-sheet-national-origin-discrimination>).

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 San Francisco District Office

[PRC Industries Pays \\$400,000 to Settle EEOC Racial Harassment, Retaliation Lawsuit](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/prc-industries-pays-400000-settle-eeoc-racial-harassment-retaliation-lawsuit) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/prc-industries-pays-400000-settle-eeoc-racial-harassment-retaliation-lawsuit>)

[EEOC Sues Tesla for Racial Harassment and Retaliation \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-tesla-racial-harassment-and-retaliation\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-tesla-racial-harassment-and-retaliation)

[EEOC Sues PRC Industries for Racial Harassment and Retaliatory Termination \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-prc-industries-racial-harassment-and-retaliatory-termination\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-prc-industries-racial-harassment-and-retaliatory-termination)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of National Origin

[Tulare City School District to Pay \\$45,000 in EEOC National Origin Discrimination Charge \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/tulare-city-school-district-pay-45000-eeoc-national-origin-discrimination-charge\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/tulare-city-school-district-pay-45000-eeoc-national-origin-discrimination-charge)

[Barrett Distribution Centers to Pay \\$60,000 in EEOC Retaliation Suit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/barrett-distribution-centers-pay-60000-eeoc-retaliation-suit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/barrett-distribution-centers-pay-60000-eeoc-retaliation-suit)

[Liberty Energy to Pay \\$265,000 in EEOC Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/liberty-energy-pay-265000-eeoc-discrimination-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/liberty-energy-pay-265000-eeoc-discrimination-lawsuit)