



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

05-31-2023

Inspira Medical Centers to Pay \$100,000 to Conciliate EEOC Discrimination Finding

Hospital and Health Center Operator Found to Have Denied Employees Religious Exemption From Vaccine Mandate, Federal Agency Said

PHILADELPHIA -- Inspira Medical Centers, Inc., a New Jersey corporation, also known as Inspira Health Network, which owns and operates several hospitals and numerous health centers in New Jersey, has entered into conciliation agreements with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to resolve six religious discrimination charges, the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC, all six charges were the result of Inspira denying employees a religious exemption to its mandatory influenza vaccination policy. Prior to 2020, Inspira's influenza vaccination policy provided for both medical and religious exemptions. In 2020, Inspira modified its influenza vaccination policy in an attempt to comply with a New Jersey statute that requires health care employees to get the influenza vaccine. The statute provided for medical exemptions but didn't provide religious exemptions. Inspira then modified its pre-existing influenza vaccination policy to remove the ability to obtain a religious exemption and denied their employees' request for a religious accommodation.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires

employers to provide reasonable accommodations to the sincerely held religious beliefs of their employees.

According to the conciliation agreements, Inspira will provide a total of \$100,000 in compensatory damages to five employees who agreed to conciliate their charges, and will also revise its influenza vaccination policy to explicitly provide employees an exemption to the policy because of an employee's sincerely held religious beliefs; disseminate the revised influenza vaccination policy; and grant requests for reasonable accommodations to its influenza vaccination policy based on sincerely held religious beliefs, except where doing so would impose an undue burden on Inspira. Inspira also agreed that compliance with the statute shall not be considered as imposing an undue burden and cannot be a justification for denying a request for a reasonable accommodation.

"Title VII allows employees with sincerely held religious beliefs to seek reasonable accommodations, and the EEOC is committed to enforcing the Title VII requirement that employers reasonably accommodate their workers with sincerely-held religious beliefs absent undue hardship," said EEOC Philadelphia District Director Jamie Williamson.

More information about religious discrimination can be found at [**https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination**](https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination**](https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination)).

The EEOC's Philadelphia District Office has jurisdiction over Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, and parts of New Jersey and Ohio. Attorneys in the Philadelphia District Office also prosecute discrimination cases in Washington, D.C., and parts of Virginia.

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) ([**http://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**](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new)).