



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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Community Hospital to Pay \$158,000 to Settle EEOC Disability Discrimination Lawsuit

Settles Federal Charges Hospital Failed to Transfer Injured Nurse to a Vacant Job She Could Perform, and Terminated Her Instead

INDIANAPOLIS – Munster Medical Research Foundation, Inc., doing business as Community Hospital, agreed to pay \$158,000, rehire a former registered nurse and adopt policy changes to settle a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Community Hospital refused to return the nurse to work after a workplace injury resulted in lifting restrictions. To maintain her employment, the employee pursued several jobs at Community Hospital she could have performed with her lifting restrictions. Community Hospital failed to reassign her to any vacant position for which she qualified. Community Hospital then terminated the employee because she could not return to her prior job and did not obtain another position with the hospital.

The alleged conduct violated the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination against employees with disabilities and requires employers to

provide reasonable accommodations, unless the accommodations would cause an undue hardship. The EEOC filed suit (*EEOC v. Munster Medical Research Foundation, Inc., d/b/a Community Hospital*, Case Number 2:23-cv-201) in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

In addition to monetary relief the EEOC procured for the employee, the three-year consent decree settling the lawsuit includes injunctive relief to ensure qualified employees are not terminated due to their disabilities when reassignments to vacant positions within Community Hospital's system are possible. The decree also requires Community Hospital to ensure all employees in the human resources department receive annual training on the ADA's reasonable accommodation requirements.

"The EEOC is committed to enforcing the ADA and removing barriers to employment for qualified employees with disabilities," said Michelle Eisele, district director for the EEOC's Indianapolis District Office.

"The ADA requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities that will allow them to perform their essential job duties," said EEOC Indianapolis District Office Regional Attorney Kenneth L. Bird. "When an employee can no longer perform the essential duties of her current job, the ADA provides that reassignment to a vacant position may be a reasonable accommodation. The EEOC is ready to step in to enforce disability discrimination law."

The Indianapolis District Office of the EEOC oversees Indiana, Michigan, Kentucky, and parts of Ohio.

For more information on disability discrimination, please visit

<https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc-disability-related-resources>

<https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc-disability-related-resources>. For more

information on the ADA's reasonable accommodation requirement, please visit

<https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc-disability-related-resources/reasonable-accommodation> (**<https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc-disability-related-resources/reasonable-accommodation>**).

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at

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