



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 3, 2011

Nurses Forced to Assist With Abortions Sue N.J. Hospital

A dozen nurses in New Jersey have filed a law suit against their employer, charging that they were forced to assist with abortions. According to the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), the conservative legal advocacy group representing the nurses, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) initiated a policy in September requiring that nurses serving in its Same Day Surgery Unit to assist with abortion procedures or face losing their jobs.



ADF noted that “federal law prohibits hospitals that receive certain federal funds from forcing employees to participate in abortions. UMDNJ receives approximately \$60 million in federal funds annually. In addition, New Jersey law states, ‘No person shall be required to perform or assist in the performance of an abortion or sterilization.’”

On October 14 UMDNJ began scheduling nurses to go through training for assisting with abortion, with the trainees required to actually help out with the procedure. When one of the nurses objected to the requirement, explaining that abortion conflicted with her religious beliefs, a supervisor responded that the medical facility had “no regard for religious beliefs” of its employees, reported ADF.

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“Pro-life nurses shouldn’t be forced to assist in abortions against their beliefs,” said ADF Legal Counsel Matt Bowman. “No less than 12 nurses have encountered threats to their jobs at this hospital ever since a policy change required them to participate in the abortions regardless of their religious objections. That is flatly illegal.”

ADF attorneys have asked the court to order a halt to the training while the nurses’ lawsuit moves forward, as well as order UMDNJ to return a portion of the tax funds it has received, citing the hospital’s violation of both federal and state laws.

According to the Associated Press, the hospital released a statement insisting that none of its nurses is required to participate in procedures he or she objects to on religious or moral grounds. Bowman said that hospital officials had agreed to meet with the nurses regarding the conflict, but abruptly cancelled the meeting when the nurses arrived with their ADF attorney.

ADF noted that it is assisting in a [similar case](#) in which New York’s Mt. Sinai Hospital threatened one of its nurses, Cathy Cenzon-DeCarlo, with termination and the loss of her professional license if she refused to respond to a last-minute summons to assist with a late-term abortion. Although the surgery was not classified as an emergency and the patient appeared to be in no danger, the hospital demanded



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that DeCarlo participate in the procedure, even though the hospital had been aware since 2004 of her Catholic faith and her moral objections to abortion.

In the suit ADF attorneys charge that the hospital violated New York state conscience laws and state laws against religious employment discrimination, as well as intentionally inflicting emotional distress on DeCarlo for forcing her to participate in terminating the life of baby.

“Pro-life nurses shouldn’t be forced to assist in abortions against their beliefs,” said the ADF’s Matt Bowman. “It is illegal, unethical, and a violation of Cathy’s rights of conscience as a devout Catholic to require her to participate in terminating the life of a 22-week pre-born child. It was not only wrong, it was needless.”

Joseph Ruta, ADF’s lead counsel in the case, added that “conscience is often what brings health care workers into the medical field. Denying or coercing their conscience will likely drive them right out.”



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