

Vanderbilt Backs Down on Forced Abortion Participation

✖ Earlier this week, Charisma reported that Vanderbilt University was forcing nurse residency applicants to pledge that they will participate in abortion procedures. The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) has succeeded in getting the university to back off.

Vanderbilt announced in an e-mail to applicants that it had modified its policy a day after the ADF filed a complaint with the Department of Health and Human Services. The e-mail read:

“While Vanderbilt expects all health care providers, including nurses who participate in the Nurse Residency Program’s Women’s Health Track, to provide compassionate care to all patients, no health care provider is required to participate in a procedure terminating a pregnancy if such participation would be contrary to an individual’s religious beliefs or moral convictions... Attached to this communication is an information sheet that replaces the Women’s Health Acknowledgment form that accompanied the application packet.”

Vanderbilt receives more than \$300 million in federal tax dollars each year, and federal law prohibits grant recipients from forcing students or health care workers to participate in abortions contrary to their religious beliefs or moral convictions.

ADF attorneys filed the complaints on behalf of two fourth-year nursing students at other universities who wished to apply to Vanderbilt’s nurse residency program but have been unable to do so because page 15 of the nurse residency application required them to promise to participate in abortions.

“Christians and other pro-life members of the medical

community shouldn't be forced to participate in abortions to pursue their profession. That's what federal law says, and that's why Vanderbilt is doing the right thing in changing its policy and application," says ADF Legal Counsel Matt Bowman. "We will be monitoring the situation to make sure the university continues to comply with the law. It's ironic that Vanderbilt changed its policy one day after denying that it required the pledge."