

Courts Say 'Not So Fast': Vaccine Mandate Takes Yet Another Hit

Today, at the conclusion of an emergency hearing, a federal District Court of Illinois issued a temporary restraining order against NorthShore University HealthSystem on behalf of 14 health care workers who have been unlawfully discriminated against and denied religious exemptions from the COVID shot mandate. The court said the plaintiffs are likely to prevail on Title VII and the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act.

The court set November 16 for a preliminary injunction hearing. In the meantime, Liberty Counsel will file a brief with the court for conditional class status to extend the relief for the entire class of health care workers.

As of last Friday, NorthShore had already started purging employees with sincere religious objections to its "Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy," by removing many of those employees from the November work schedule, including those whose appeals were still pending.

NorthShore previously granted exemptions for some employees but then denied them in mid-September. Those denials were either without explanation or because the requests failed to meet some so-called "evidence-based criteria" that NorthShore never provided the employees in advance. NorthShore then only gave employees three business days to file an appeal without stating what was missing in the original application.'

In that appeal, NorthShore also apparently judged the validity of their religious beliefs by requiring them to include their entire vaccination history since the age of eighteen. However, NorthShore never requested employees to provide prior vaccine

information in their initial exemption requests.

After denying these employees, NorthShore also changed its exemption form to include a warning that all religious objections based on “aborted fetal cell lines, stem cells, tissue or derivative materials will result in denials.” NorthShore is falsely deceptive in that form by stating that the COVID-19 injections have no link to aborted fetal cell lines and refuting the religious beliefs of health care workers who object to the undeniable connection of the injections to aborted fetal cell lines.

Illinois law dictates that employees at NorthShore University HealthSystem have the fundamental right to determine what medical care to accept and refuse. In fact, Illinois has a Health Care Right of Conscience Act that provides strong protection to all residents against discrimination based on health care choices. It states: “It shall be unlawful for any person, public or private institution, or public official to discriminate against any person in any manner, including but not limited to, licensing, hiring, promotion, or any other privileges, because of such person’s conscientious refusal to receive, obtain, accept or participate in any way in any particular form of health care services contrary to his or her conscience” (emphasis added).

Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver said, “Today’s ruling gave emergency relief to Liberty Counsel’s 14 plaintiffs who were threatened to be terminated by NorthShore University HealthSystem for their religious beliefs. This health care facility’s plans to purge employees who have sincere religious beliefs against the COVID shots has been foiled. These health care workers are heroes.” {eo}

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