

Judge Grants Temporary Restraining Order In Vaccine Mandate Case; Riverside Nurses Can't Be Fired For Refusing COVID Vaccine

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KANKAKEE — A group of nurses for Riverside Healthcare won an important victory yesterday after a Kankakee County judge said their hospital system cannot fire them yet for refusing to get the COVID vaccine. The nurses were facing termination on Oct. 31 until today's action by Judge Nancy Nicholson.

The nurses filed a lawsuit earlier this month after the healthcare system announced a blanket rejection of any and all exemption requests, in violation of the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker's executive order. They appeared in court today with their attorneys at the Liberty Justice Center, a national nonprofit law firm.

"Today's ruling marks an important step toward victory for these nurses – and it sends a signal to all Americans about the importance of fighting for your rights," said Daniel Suhr, managing attorney at the Liberty Justice Center. "Employers and government officials should take note that forcing people to violate their conscience not only is wrong, it's illegal. No one should be forced to choose between keeping their job and sacrificing their beliefs."

The Temporary Restraining Order will be in place until Nov. 19 when the judge will hold a hearing on the Motion for Preliminary Injunction to offer ongoing protection.

Panozzo v. Riverside Healthcare was filed Oct.13, 2021, in Circuit Court for the Twenty-First Circuit in Kankakee County, Illinois. Case filings are available here:

<https://libertyjusticecenter.org/media/illinois-nurses>