

56 Riverside Healthcare Employees Ask To Join Lawsuit To Stop Firings Over Covid Vaccine Mandate

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KANKAKEE — On Monday, Oct. 25, Judge Nancy Nicholson halted Riverside Healthcare’s plans to fire a group of nurses for their conscience-based objection to vaccination. Now, on the heels of this important victory, the nurses’ attorneys have filed an amended complaint to protect an additional 56 Riverside employees from being fired. These workers face termination on Oct. 31.

Attorneys at the Liberty Justice Center, a national nonprofit law firm representing Riverside employees, have requested an emergency hearing to protect the rights and livelihoods of the healthcare workers.

“Despite the judge’s ruling protecting Riverside nurses from being fired, the healthcare system’s leaders have refused to extend the same right to all of its employees,” Daniel Suhr, managing attorney at the Liberty Justice Center. “The fact that 56 additional Riverside healthcare workers have stepped forward to join this case shows the need for robust protection for rights of conscience for all employees.”

The nurses filed a lawsuit earlier this month after the healthcare system announced a blanket rejection of any and all exemption requests from patient-facing employees, in violation of the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker’s executive order. The temporary restraining order issued by Judge Nicholson in a Kankakee state court is in place for four Riverside nurses 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/riverside-employees>**