

EEOC NEWS



U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

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EEOC SUES HACKENSACK MERIDIAN HEALTH FOR RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

Healthcare Network Discriminated Against Employee Due to Employee's Religion, Federal Agency Charges

NEW YORK, N.Y. – Hackensack Meridian Health, a New Jersey healthcare network, violated federal law when a manager engaged in the harassment of a Catholic employee because of the employee's religious beliefs, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Hackensack was aware of but failed to stop a hostile work environment at its Edison, New Jersey facility. Shortly after the employee was hired to perform clinical data analytics work, his manager learned he was Catholic and reacted negatively upon seeing a crucifix in the employee's office. Since then, the manager regularly belittled him, screamed at him, and ridiculed his work in front of others.

This alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination based on religion, which includes subjecting employees to hostile or abusive treatment because of an employee's religious beliefs. The EEOC filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey (*EEOC v. Hackensack Meridian Health*, Civil Action No. 2:18-CV-12856) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

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“All employees are entitled to work in an environment free from unlawful harassment,” said EEOC New York Regional Attorney Jeffrey Burstein. “That includes hostile treatment motivated by an employee’s religious beliefs.”

“Equal opportunity in the workplace requires respect for the diversity of the American workforce,” said EEOC’s New York District Director Kevin Berry. “People of all religions are entitled to go to work and do their jobs without fear of harassment.”

The New York District Office of the EEOC is responsible for processing discrimination charges, administrative enforcement and the conduct of agency litigation in New York, northern New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov. Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our [email updates](#).

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