

Roseland Community Hospital Sued By EEOC for Pregnancy Discrimination

Article By:

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Agency Charges South Side Hospital Refused to Accommodate And Fired Pregnant Employee

CHICAGO - Roseland Community Hospital, on Chicago's South Side, violated federal law when it **refused to accommodate an employee with a high-risk pregnancy** and fired her instead, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit it filed in federal district court here today.

John Rowe, the director of the EEOC's Chicago District, who managed the agency's administrative investigation, said Roseland refused to accommodate the employee consistent with her medical restrictions by not requiring her to be available to restrain disorderly and combative patients, and went on to fire her. Rowe said that on the other hand, **a male security guard with an injury sought an accommodation** so that he would not be required to restrain patients, and he was assigned to a desk job.

"You can't deny a female employee a temporary change in her duties due to her pregnancy while providing the same accommodation to a man. That's pregnancy discrimination and it can't pass muster under federal law," Rowe said.

Pregnancy discrimination violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC filed suit, *EEOC v Roseland Community Hospital*, N.D. Ill., No. 14 C 7235, in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. The suit has been assigned to District Judge Charles P. Kocoras and Magistrate Judge Jeffrey Cole. The EEOC's litigation of the case will be led by Supervisory Trial Attorney Diane Smason and Trial Attorney June Calhoun.

John Hendrickson, the EEOC Chicago District's regional attorney, said, "Roseland Community Hospital is an exceptionally important institution in the community it serves. One would hope that it would be a beacon for compliance with all our civil rights laws, particularly those which prohibit discrimination on account of pregnancy. This is not what appears to have happened here. We are hopeful that this litigation will remedy the situation and make matters right."

The EEOC's Chicago District Office is responsible for processing discrimination charges,

administrative enforcement, and the conduct of agency litigation in Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota, with Area Offices in Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

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National Law Review, Volume IV, Number 264

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/roseland-community-hospital-sued-eeoc-pregnancy-discrimination>