



# Cumberland County woman says she is being fired for refusing COVID-19 vaccine

Grace Griffaton 1 day ago



*Editors note: The video above is from March 2, 2021.*

A Cumberland County healthcare worker says she is being fired after refusing the COVID-19 vaccine. 26-year-old Desiree Pelletier of Newville says her employer Hempfield Behavioral Health is requiring the vaccine in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Pelletier says she isn't anti-vaccination; she just wants more time to decide if it's best for her body.

"I would go sit in-person with my doctor and talk to my doctor, if I was given six months to decide," said Pelletier during a Zoom interview with FOX43.

However, Pelletier says she only had 30 days to decide if she would get a COVID-19 vaccine after vaccination became a requirement.

"I love the job. It was very rewarding. I had to sit down with myself and think, 'ya know, I don't feel it's right. Is this job worth doing something I don't think is right?'" explained Pelletier.

Pelletier expressed concern because the vaccines are authorized for emergency use and because she wants to become pregnant. So, she called her doctor.

"He could not tell me that he would recommend me not getting it, but he also said it should be my choice," she said. "I was a mess the whole time I had to make this decision, physically sick. I was thinking, 'should I get it so I have a job, so I have insurance?'"

Ultimately, Pelletier's personal beliefs and concerns outweighed the new requirement. She received a suspension letter which states she had 30 days to provide proof of, at minimum, receiving the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. She's now at the 30 day mark, and termination is imminent.

"I don't understand why I couldn't sit here and Zoom unvaccinated with participants. I didn't understand why I can't be on the property with a mask on like I have done from June of 2020 to November of 2020," questioned Pelletier.

She's not alone in refusing the medication. Pelletier says four women in total have said 'no' to the vaccine.

"They suspended me, and we're doing Zoom meetings right now, and there's no reason I can't work. I loved it. It was my dream job," said Brandie Mentzer-Gordon.

We contacted Hempfield Behavioral Health for comment So far, we have not received a response.

The suspension provides insight into why the vaccine is being required. It states, Pelletier works with "people who are quote at high risk of becoming severely ill or dying if they contract COVID-19, and many will not be able to receive the vaccine because of valid medical conditions."

It comes as state lawmakers debate proposed legislation that centers around the 'Right to Refuse' a COVID-19 vaccine. Doctors call that proposed legislation a serious public health concern. If hospital workers and healthcare employees refuse the shot, they say that could lead to community spread.



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