

## **Physician Assistant Files Federal Lawsuit Against Michigan Health After She was Fired for Her Beliefs about Gender**

*Suit argues client's firing violates state and federal laws*

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**Grand Rapids, MI**—First Liberty Institute filed a federal lawsuit against University of Michigan Health – West on behalf of Valerie Kloosterman, a physician assistant terminated after she sought a religious accommodation from referring patients for sex-obscuring procedures and experimental drugs, and from using biology-obscuring pronouns.

You can read the complaint [here](#).

“Because Valerie wouldn't violate her conscience, Michigan Health violated her rights and ended her employment,” said Kayla Toney, Counsel for First Liberty Institute. “It is blatantly intolerant of Michigan Health to demand that medical professionals like Valerie abandon their religious beliefs in order to remain employed. Valerie loves her community and her job. She is devastated that the University of Michigan health system derided her beliefs and demanded that she choose between her faith and providing health care.”

As the third generation in her family to work in her local health care system, Kloosterman served her community for 17 years at Michigan Health. She regularly received exemplary reviews, and supervisors called her “professional,” “very ethical,” and a “pleasure to work with.” She treated all her patients respectfully, regardless of their background, sexual orientation, or declared gender. In summer 2021, after mandatory “diversity and inclusion” training, she asked for a religious accommodation because she could not affirm statements about gender that violated her Christian beliefs, nor could she participate by referring patients for sex-obscuring surgeries or using pronouns that conflicted with human biology. During follow-up meetings, a Michigan Health diversity representative called Kloosterman “evil,” blamed her for gender dysphoria-related suicides, and told her she could not take the Bible or her religious beliefs to work with her. Less than a month later, she was fired.

In the lawsuit, First Liberty attorneys state, “Defendants targeted Ms. Kloosterman for termination because she requested an accommodation for her religious beliefs. Defendants also violated the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, as incorporated against the states via the Fourteenth Amendment, when they granted secular accommodations to other employees regarding common drugs and medical procedures while failing to grant a religious accommodation to Ms. Kloosterman regarding much more rare drugs and medical procedures.”

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### **About First Liberty Institute**

[First Liberty Institute](#) is a non-profit public interest law firm and the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

To arrange an interview, contact Peyton Luke at [media@firstliberty.org](mailto:media@firstliberty.org) or by calling 972-941-4453.