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Nurses Fired for Facebook Posts Speak Out

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03/30/10 6:21 pm | reporter: [Dennis Owens](#) producer: [Bryan Peach](#)

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Harrisburg, Pa. - So you're in your own home, on your own computer, on your own time, typing on Facebook. It could be your undoing. Thirteen ER nurses from Harrisburg Hospital were recently fired after what they thought was an innocent and private online chat.

Facebook is a phenomenon, a wildly popular way to reconnect with long-lost friends or share common interests with strangers. abc27 has a Facebook page as a fun way for viewers to reach out to us. But be careful, that Facebook fun could get you fired.

That happened to 13 ER nurses and staff. They were fired for posts to what they thought was a private Harrisburg Hospital ER group chat.

"The one posting I put was, "That lady was crazy," said Lee Ann Campbell, one of the fired employees. "There was no name mentioned, those were the only four words I said."

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But Pinnacle Health had a two-word reply to Campbell: you're fired. The 25-year-old worked six years for Pinnacle.

"I would never have thought that what I posted in the privacy of my own home would have ever ended up being the big mess that it is," she said.

Ellie Stutzman visited the hospital's Facebook site once, and responded to someone else's post asking why people were getting shot at 3 a.m.

"I made a comment that people that were getting shot at 3 in the morning were probably trying to just sell their Bibles on the way to church," she said.

Again, she mentioned no names or races. But in her termination papers, Pinnacle said she discriminated against gunshot victims and black people, which Ellie found especially offensive.

"My daughter is biracial," she said. "Never discriminated against anybody in my lifetime."

"If I get wind of it and I don't want that type of person associated with my company, I have every right in Pennsylvania to terminate them," said attorney Todd Shill of Rhoads and Sinon. Shill doesn't represent Pinnacle, but he represents other companies in such cases. He says this is an at-will state, meaning employers can fire for any reason - or no reason at all.



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"In the world of private business, there's no First Amendment right," he said. "These aren't public employers we're talking about, these are private employers."

But Harrisburg attorney Robert Mirin disagrees. He represents the three women and is suing for wrongful termination.

"Social networking and conduct away from work is one of the new frontiers," said Mirin. "It's like Captain Kirk, kind of going where no man and no woman has gone before."

The nurses say they'd like back pay, but more importantly, they want to erase the stigma of being fired.

Pinnacle Health had no comment today. In the past, they've told abc27 the posts were inappropriate and unprofessional.

ER nurses are typically in hot demand, but these nurses are struggling to find jobs. They feel they're being black-balled by other hospitals because of these firings. These three say they've never been in any trouble or been disciplined at work.

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posted by: Really on 11:34 pm on 03/31/10

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If one is BURNED OUT on a job, it is time to find another one. Also, people need to be aware that jobs are few and their being fired may NOT have affected not being hired elsewhere. How does one determine the reason another hospital did not hire them? The hospitals are finding other means of filling positions now. Skilled nurses are available through programs such as "Traveling Nurses" and "Agencies".

Yes, nurses are in demand BUT there are classes of nurses out there that are finding it hard to get hired.

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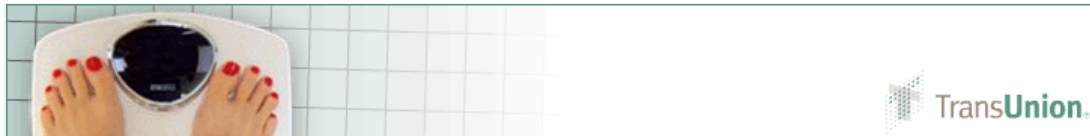
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