



Health care workers protest against NorthShore University HealthSystem's vaccine mandate outside Evanston Hospital in Evanston, Ill., on Oct. 12, 2021. (Cara Ding/The Epoch Times)

PREMIUM **HEALTH NEWS**

Health Care Workers Who Sued Over COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Win \$10 Million Settlement

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A group of health care workers who sued their hospital over a [COVID-19 vaccine](#) mandate are slated to receive \$10 million, according to a settlement agreement filed on July 29.

About a dozen workers at the NorthShore University HealthSystem in [Illinois](#) lodged [the suit in October 2021](#), arguing that the facility was illegally not granting religious exemptions to the mandate.

After eight months of negotiations, the workers and NorthShore “have agreed to settle this case,” according to [a memorandum](#) filed in federal court.

Under the settlement’s terms, NorthShore will pay \$10,337,500 into a settlement fund for workers affected by its mandate—specifically, workers who between July 1, 2021, and Jan. 1, 2022, asked for a religious accommodation and were denied and either received a vaccine to avoid termination or were fired or resigned. About 473 workers fit under that category.

NorthShore will also adjust its vaccine mandate “to enhance its accommodation procedures for individuals with approved exemptions for sincerely held religious belief.”

Workers fired because they refused to get vaccinated due to their religious beliefs are eligible to apply for re-employment.

U.S. District Judge John Kness, the Trump appointee overseeing the case, was asked to approve the proposed settlement.

Liberty Counsel, the legal group representing the plaintiffs, described the settlement as a first-of-its-kind for an action against a private employer who denied hundreds of requests for religious exemptions to a COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

“The drastic policy change and substantial monetary relief required by the settlement will bring a strong measure of justice to NorthShore’s employees who were callously forced to choose between their conscience and their jobs,” Horatio Mihet, vice president of legal affairs at the group, said in a statement.

“This settlement should also serve as a strong warning to employers across the nation that they cannot refuse to accommodate those with sincere religious objections to forced vaccination mandates,” he added.

Fund

If the agreement is approved, affected workers could apply for money from the \$10 million fund.

Each worker who eventually got a vaccine despite raising religious objections would be eligible for approximately \$3,000 while those who were fired or resigned could get up to about \$25,000, according to estimates.

The final amounts will depend on how many workers apply for money, among other factors.

In addition, the agreement sets aside \$260,000 for the named plaintiffs in the case. Each would be slated to receive about \$20,000, on top of the other funds.

Liberty Counsel is also asking for \$2 million in attorneys fees, or about 20 percent of the total settlement.