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Woman Was Employed at JFL for Two Years as Certified Medical Assistant With Fraudulent Certification Documents

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Juan F. Luis Hospital logo. The medical center has been described as being in "dire straights" by an employee with intimate knowledge of operations and other hospital dealings. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CONSORTIUM

A woman who was employed at the Juan F. Luis Hospital for two years as a certified medical assistant was let go between January and February following an audit of hospital records, but Dyma Williams, JFL Interim CEO, said she did not know whether the Dept. of Justice was alerted, though Ms. Williams agreed that the behavior was criminal and said she had fired the employee.

The former employee was hired by Terry Lynch, who leads Human Resources at the hospital and according to her LinkedIn account, is vice president of workforce development and community engagement.

The information about the deceitful employment was provided to the Consortium by a person employed at the hospital who has intimate knowledge of the operations and dealings of the medical facility. This person requested anonymity to speak freely without retribution.

This person came forward following the collapse of a nurse on Friday who was working at the Virgin Islands Cardiac Center (VICC) building at the hospital and passed out because of excessive heat. The V.I.C.C. has been without AC going on three weeks, and the remaining five patients that were being treated in the outpatient facility when the incident occurred were immediately removed and placed in the progressive care unit (PCU) on the second floor, Ms. Williams said.

Asked if Ms. Lynch was a good friend of hers, Ms. Williams stated, "I have a lot of personal friends." She later added, "To your point, I do have a lot of friends that work at JFL that are personal friends of mine. So if the implication is that there's something that was going on and we were trying to cover it up, crap," she said.

Ms. Williams explained that audits are performed at JFL routinely. The concerns relative to the former employee, however, were raised by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) after it was determined that some personnel files did not have updated certification. Ms. Williams said as a result of those concerns, JFL performed an HR audit.

"We were asking people to validate certifications and when there was an identification that there was this certification that was questionable," the hospital reached out to the institution, which confirmed that there was no record of this employee in their system, Ms. Williams said.

She added, "When we reached out to the person there was kind of like a non response and next thing we knew this person was zero response." She Ms. Lynch discovered the fraud — the same person who hired the employee, said the JFL CEO. "So she absolutely was holding the person accountable following a process as a result of an ongoing standard within the healthcare setting," she said.

It was not clear why a background check was not performed on the employee before she was hired to work as a CMA.

A CMA supports patient care delivery by helping health care providers during examinations; preparing laboratory specimens; performing basic laboratory tests on the premises; disposing of contaminated supplies; sterilizing medical instruments; administering medications on the premises; authorizing drug refills as directed; telephoning prescriptions to pharmacies; drawing blood; preparing patients for x-rays; taking electrocardiograms; removing sutures; changing dressings.

Ms. Williams stressed that the matter was "immediately addressed." Asked for her definition of immediately addressed, she said, "I find it today, I call the employee today and then the employee is then unresponsive. I don't know how more immediate that was. It wasn't nothing ongoing."

Asked whether she understood that the former employee's behavior was criminal, Ms. Williams stated, "I am certain that there are some reporting requirements for persons who falsify documents; I'd have to go back to see what else occurred as a result of that investigation, but I think one of the challenges were that this person was completely unresponsive. Immediate action

was taken internal to JFL in terms of ensuring that it was addressed. If there's additional action taken I'd have to go back and determine that."

Senator Novelle Francis, who chairs the Senate Committee on Health, Hospitals and Human Services and is also a former law enforcement officer, police chief and police commissioner, told the Consortium in a separate interview that the matter should have been immediately turned over to the Dept. of Justice and Office of the Attorney General.

The Consortium has reached out to the Dept. of Justice for comment on the matter, however a response was not immediately provided.

Ms. Williams agreed that the documents should have been turned over, but later stated, "I don't want to misrepresent what I don't know. If any other action was taken specific to the investigation, I'd have to get back to you on that." She said in the past she has reported to the A.G.'s office matters of concern, but couldn't speak to the situation involving the former employee who engaged in the fraudulent activity... "I don't want to misrepresent anything on the record," she said.

Relative to her friendship with Ms. Lynch, and Ms. Lynch's familial ties to the former employee and the potential for clouded judgement, Ms. Williams stated, "I'll tell you, because this is such a small place I've had to terminate people that are very close to me, so this would not be the first hard decision that I've had to make as a CEO."

Ms. Lynch has also hired her cousin to serve as director of maintenance of the facility, Dennis Lynch, according to the well placed JFL employee. The director of maintenance has an assistant, a situation that confounded the employee who could not understand why he would need one. Sen. Francis highlighted the fact that the hospital [keeps saying it does not have money](#), yet was acting as if funds were not an issue.

The employee also decried the relationship between Ms. Williams and Ms. Lynch, stating that they were so close that it would be hard for Ms. Williams to hold Ms. Lynch accountable if the need arose — an implication that Ms. Williams vehemently relegates.