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Dept. of Justice Says it Has No Record of Case Involving Former Employee Who Was Fired From JFL For Allegedly Providing Fraudulent CMA Credentials

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Pashanique Brown, former JFL employee whose certification document was found to be fake after JFL officials contacted the institution Ms. Brown said she earned the certification from. The JFL personnel audit followed concerns from CMS. By. **FACEBOOK**

The V.I. Dept. of Justice on Monday responded to a Consortium query concerning Pashanique Brown, a woman who was allegedly fired by the Juan F. Luis Hospital earlier this year for providing fraudulent certified medical assistant (CMA) certification documents that led to her hiring by the hospital, where she worked for two years. The Consortium sought to learn whether hospital officials had forwarded the criminal activity to the Dept. of Justice following Interim

CEO Dyma Williams's comment Sunday that she did not know whether such action had taken place.

Ms. Brown was hired as a CMA by Terry Lynch — family to Ms. Brown — who leads Human Resources at the hospital. Still unknown is why a background check was not conducted before the employment was given.

The information about the deceitful employment was provided to the Consortium by a whistleblower 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, and came forward after [a nurse collapsed Friday](#) while working at the V.I. Cardiac Center at the hospital. The facility has been without AC going on three weeks, with heat reaching near 100 degrees.

The hospital is "in dire straits," the whistleblower told the Consortium Friday. "People think, 'JFL suck, I'm going to die...' It's really getting to that point. It really is getting to the point where we cannot sustain giving health to the community."

In its response to the Consortium, the Dept. of Justice stated, "There is no criminal case prosecuted in the Attorney General's Office under the name of Pashanique Brown as the defendant." Attempts to reach Ms. Williams, the JFL CEO, on Monday were unsuccessful. A message left on her cellphone for comment has not received a response.

During an interview on Sunday, Ms. Williams explained that audits are performed at JFL routinely. However, she said concerns relative to Ms. Brown were raised following a recent Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) visit, after CMS 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."

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.

On Sunday, Ms. Williams agreed that the matter should have been turned over to the V.I. D.O.J., 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."

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 whistleblower. The director of maintenance has an assistant, a situation that confounded the whistleblower who could not understand why he would need one. Sen. Francis highlighted the fact that the hospital [says it does not have money](#), yet was acting as if funds were not an issue.

The whistleblower 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 dismisses.