

The *Christian Healthcare* Case

Case Name: *Christian Healthcare Centers v. Nessel*

Case Action: Filed complaint and motion for preliminary injunction in the Western District of Michigan on Monday, August 29

Significance: Whether the government can punish religious organizations for hiring religious employees and serving the community consistent with their beliefs.



Background: Since 2017, Christian Healthcare Centers has provided high-quality primary medical care to people of western Michigan, including to those who cannot afford medical care. Christian Healthcare treats the whole person, giving attention to a patient's emotional and spiritual needs that traditional practices often neglect. In addition to providing top-notch medical care, their employees pray with patients and discuss the spiritual dimensions of health care. Michigan courts recently reinterpreted Michigan civil rights law to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Now this religious ministry must provide cross-sex hormones contrary to their religious beliefs and medical judgment, address people with pronouns inconsistent with their biological sex, and even hire employees who do not share the ministry's faith. These requirements directly threaten the ministry's ability to provide safe, high quality medical care to the community consistent with their religious beliefs. Alliance Defending Freedom is representing Christian Healthcare Centers in a lawsuit filed against the Attorney General of Michigan and other enforcement officials to protect their ability to serve all people in a manner consistent with their faith.

Key Points

- Christian Healthcare roots everything they do in their faith. This includes how they care for the community and who they hire.
- They provide medical care to all people no matter their background, often discounting costs to ensure those in need can access quality care.
- The ministry provides care to all people but does not perform treatments that violate its Christian beliefs, including prescribing cross-sex hormones to patients.
- These laws would cause Christian Healthcare two options: deny their deeply held beliefs or close their doors and stop serving their community.

Key Facts

- Christian Healthcare operates according to their deeply held Christian beliefs. Every employee must affirm their statement of faith and provide care in accordance with their Christian beliefs.
- They run two clinics in Western Michigan, providing a Christian, membership-based healthcare alternative.
- Due to the newly interpreted law, Christian Healthcare is threatened with potential penalties such as \$50,000 fines, loss of medical licenses, and jail time if they do not change how they speak and operate.

The Bottom Line: Religious organizations should be free to operate and serve their communities according to their beliefs without the fear of government punishment.