

Renee McPherson  
Windham, Maine ~ Northern Light Health Care

Good Evening

My Name is Renee McPherson. I have been a registered nurse since 2005. I am writing to you today to discuss my experience as a nurse in the state of Maine and to request that the current Vaccine mandate be investigated and given more time for safety testing.

Since 2005 I have dedicated my time and career to a greater purpose than myself, I have dedicated my time to serving the sick, those in need and more recently, those affected by the pandemic.

In March 2020, I was employed by Northern Light, Mercy Health Care and worked in a local urgent care. The urgent care, at that time, closed its doors to those that were sick/or thought to have COVID. Immediately, I worked alongside Dr. Hammond, Francine Wilbur and Mercy's infectious control team and requested that they allow me to help those in need. I was voluntarily deployed to the COVID respiratory tent, where I worked from March through September. Conditions were frigid in the beginning, above 100 and difficult through the summer, but we managed, knowing there was a bigger purpose we were serving. I continued to work with the sick population, I took care of the 5th person in Maine to die of COVID-19, I never denied an assignment given to me and treated all of my patient's with compassion and the same respect.

In September 2021 I was advised that I would need to be vaccinated for COVID19 to continue to provide the same, excellent patient care I had been for the previous 18 months, in order to continue employment. This was not a choice, it was coercion and basically an ultimatum.

I had just sacrificed the past 18 months, putting myself and my family at risk to fulfill my duty as an RN and provide excellent patient care and now all of the sudden I was told I couldn't work unless I took a vaccine, with less than 2 years of safety testing to continue my career as a registered nurse.

I pleaded with Northern Light and my PCP, that I had taken extra steps to boost and improve my immune system. We discussed in great lengths that the vaccine wouldn't prevent me from getting or transmitting the virus. I was not given a chance to discuss my case with the decision board at Northern Light. I was not given a choice. I was told, "get the vaccine, or you're no longer employed as a registered nurse at Northern Light, Mercy Hospital."

I was mortified, I was in turmoil. I did not want to leave my patients, I did not want to leave my coworkers short-staffed. I was willing to comply with weekly testing and continued mask mandates to keep everyone around me safe, but that wasn't enough.

I want to give back, I want to take care of my community and those in need. I am not a threat to anyone. I was forced out of a profession that now has a shortage because of recent mandates. Please let me work and take care of those in need. I went to school to become a nurse and I will never stop caring and trying to make a difference.

We are now seeing that many vaccinated peoples are testing positive and still able to transmit the virus. I should not be excluded in my desire to step up and help as many individuals as I can.