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## WorkLife Law Blog

WorkLife Law aims to end Family Responsibilities Discrimination, which is employment discrimination against workers who have family caregiving obligations. It includes discrimination against parents of young children, pregnant women, and workers who have aging or sick parents, spouses, or partners.

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Monday, October 15, 2007

### New FRD Case filed

From time to time, we come across noteworthy new FRD cases we like to pass along. Here's one that raises several interesting issues (and probably some eyebrows, too):

Children's Hospital in Boston, a major teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, apparently does not want plastic surgeons who are mothers. It tried to make the first and only female plastic surgeon ever hired by the hospital quit, and when she wouldn't, she was fired, according to a discrimination charge filed last week.

Highlights: The female plastic surgeon is a mother who worked part-time. The new Chief of Plastic Surgery informed her that he was eliminating "all" part-time surgeons to create a "world class" surgery department, although the mother was the only part-time plastic surgeon. The Chief's reference to "all" referred to the mother and to two men with full-time private practices who used Children's facilities on a part-time basis but who were not Children's employees as the mother was.

The Chief offered the two male plastic surgeons full-time positions with Children's, enticing them with financial incentives. The plastic surgeon/mother, on the other hand, says she was rebuffed when she offered to become a full-time surgeon in order to retain her position. In addition, she says, the hospital harassed her in an attempt to force her from the plastic surgery department and to shut down her practice by taking away her patients, removing her voicemail and directory information so she couldn't be contacted, interfering with her billing for office visits, and making disparaging comments about her.

The Chief of Plastic Surgery defines a "full-time" surgeon as one who puts in face time of least sixty hours per week. His own wife is a doctor who stays home full-time with their children, WLL has learned.

The plastic surgeon/mother was replaced by a less qualified male who is now operating part-time because he has a research position on the side -- which was one of the proposals the plastic surgeon/mother had made to the department for herself that was rejected.

The allegations get worse: when the plastic surgeon/mother did not resign, the hospital and the department threatened to retaliate against her for stating that she was being treated unfairly because of her gender and status as a mother. They then carried out these threats by summarily terminating her from her job, taking away her scheduled operating and clinic time, and withholding revenues that she had already earned.

We'll be keeping a close eye on this one.

# posted by WorkLife Law @ 1:01 PM

### Comments:

Do you know the docket number of this case, and where it is filed? Sounds really interesting! Thanks.

# posted by  Anonymous : 10/16/2007 08:06:00 AM

The case is Chedid v. Children's Hospital, et al. It was filed with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. It doesn't yet have a docket number, but you can ask the Commission for a copy of the charge (call Elizabeth Forman, 617-994-9000). The attorney is Rebecca Pontikes at Siegel, Wagner & Swartz in Boston (617-723-0008, [www.swslegal.com](http://www.swslegal.com)).

# posted by  WorkLife Law : 10/16/2007 12:28:00 PM

In the 1990's, Dr. Frances Conley the nation's first tenured female neurosurgeon wrote a book called Walking out on the Boys. It gave the world a glimpse into the sexual discrimination that was pervasive at the Stanford Medical Center. It is disheartening to now read about the mistreatment this woman surgeon at Harvard is enduring and to see that things haven't changed even for the most educated, talented, highly-skilled women. It is time for this discrimination to end.

# posted by  Anonymous : 10/20/2007 03:37:00 PM

I am a woman physician in California. I experienced severe discrimination while working part-time at Kaiser Permanente (nation's largest HMO) specifically because I took maternity leave (and not even my full amount!). Can your organization offer me and any others advice on our options for action ? Thank you.

# posted by  Anonymous : 10/20/2007 03:52:00 PM

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