

October 25, 2020

December 1, 2020 will be one year that I was constructively discharged from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Service (DMHAS), as the Director of Hospital and Nursing Services. I work for DMHAS a little over 18 years, and never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined going through what I and other Black women at GBCMHC have and continue to go through.

I was bullied, harassed, retaliated against, humiliated, embarrassed, my character degraded. I was in a position of fearing for the loss of my job. I was coerced (by HR) to transfer to another state facility where all my responsibilities were stripped away from me, regardless of that fact of constantly asking for my FMLA and mentioning that driving extra miles would not be good for the reasons I need FMLA. My FMLA was never acknowledged leading to the exacerbation of my illness and being constructively discharged from my position. It became so bad I could not stay any longer and they stated I left in bad standings. If I would have been granted my FMLA request, I would have been able to stay with DMHAS.

Due to not being granted my FMLA I was forced to find employment 10-15 minutes from my home. 4-months later I contracted COVID-19, in Intensive Care Unit for 10 days with machines breathing for me, my organs failing, bilateral pneumonia, septic shock, painful neuropathy, 10 pound muscle loss, inability to feed and walk independently, state of delirium, and eventually physical and occupational therapy. Through the grace and mercy of God I survived. 27 days later I was well enough to come home.

I have an exceedingly difficult time understanding why administration feel its okay to ignore the bullying, harassing, and retaliatory behavior that goes on within the state system. The senior leadership is very much aware of these behaviors. I personally reported all this behavior to the CEO of Greater Bridgeport Mental Health Center, only to find out she was part of the retaliation process toward me and others, especially after I reported racist and xenophobic behavior. She allowed the very individuals I supervised to surpass and go over my head straight to her, most of the time I did not know what was going on. This was sabotage, bullying and total disrespect and disregard for my position. I would like to know what the plans for such intolerable and unethical behavior by certain individuals within the state system will be. This type of behavior has been ignored for far too long.

Thank you,

Dorothy Washington