



Maryland Court Upholds Legal Protection for Nurse Whistleblowers

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Nurses are the front-line protectors of patient safety in hospitals, nursing homes and anywhere patients are treated. So to avoid patients being hurt by medical malpractice, it's important to protect nurses from being fired if they speak up when they see dangerous care. The Maryland Court of Appeals has just recognized this important principle of public policy in a decision reinstating a nurse's wrongful termination lawsuit against Montgomery Hospice Inc.

The case of the nurse, Susan Lark, was thrown out by a trial judge in Montgomery County, Maryland, because Ms. Lark had only complained to her supervisor about the dangerous practices she saw at

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the hospice. The trial judge said that to be protected by Maryland's health care whistleblower statute, Ms. Lark should have also complained to an outside agency like the State Board of Nursing.

The Court of Appeals, Maryland's highest court, said the trial judge was wrong. As long as the employee has reported in writing the dangerous practices to a supervisor or administrator at her workplace, that employee is protected from being fired.

Susan Lark's lawsuit contended she was discharged for making complaints about serious errors in handling narcotic drugs, such as giving narcotic "starter packets" to numerous patients, including children, without a written doctor's order.

You can read the Maryland court's decision on its website by [clicking here](#).

In other nurse whistleblower news: A lawsuit on behalf of two nurses in Winkler County, Texas, who were fired for reporting a dangerous doctor to the state medical board, is proceeding. The nurses were vindicated in criminal court earlier this year. Now their case against the hospital that fired them and the authorities who wrongly prosecuted them criminally is set for trial in November 2010. Read more on the Texas Nurses Association [website](#).

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