

April 7, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

I became a Certified Nursing Assistant after working for twenty years at a hospital in St. Paul, MN. I could no longer mentally do the job any longer and decided to make a career change. I enrolled at St. Paul College and after three months in school, I became a Certified Nursing Assistant.

I told my instructor that the only job I would take and the only place that I would work at would be the Veterans Home in Silver Bay, MN. This is where I wanted to buy a house, and work until I retire. The house buying experience was nerve wracking, but I made it though.

I was offered a full-time position in June of 2021 and my official start date was 8-2-21. Orientation was for two weeks and my first day on the floor was 8-16-21. Orientation is how things should be done. I went to the job with an open heart and had my listening ears on. My training consisted of shadowing with another CNA.

What I have seen and experienced was not at all the way I was taught at school. I was very disappointed with the lack of handwashing that I have seen. It appears that infection control is only done when something happens, an outbreak, or someone gets sick.

I have seen residents sleep on the floor from falls risk, someone given soda when they have pneumonia, this is considered a liquid. I saw a resident eat fertilizer, not sure why this poison was in the room. I have seen an HST do cares with no gloves, and no handwashing after cares. Snap and raise their voice at a resident. Some mouths are cleaned with wipes that should be used for peri cares. I saw a resident get hit, I reported it and nothing happened to the worker. An employee who was fired in 2021 for accepting a bribe from a resident is working at the VA in Silver Bay, MN. How is this possible?

The violence that the HST's tolerate to themselves my mind blowing and endure this day after day for \$16.00 an hour. They are hit, slapped, spit at, pushed, sworn at, and continue to show up day after day. They are ridiculed when they call in sick.

I have worked twenty-seven extra shifts during my seven months of employment. I have not worked eighty hours since I started there seven months ago. My average is well over 100 hours.

My review was listed as meeting expectations, yet in this review it said that I call in sick too much. I have called in sick three times, one day for grieving for the death of my mother and this was brought up at my review. I was told my communication needs to improve with the nurses, I need to work better with my co-workers. I was put on another six-month probation and lost out on the sign on bonus.

I did not take this job for the money. I took an eight dollar an hour pay cut to take this job. Over the course of these seven months. I have been talked to about who I address about situations that come up. She called it the proper chain of command, which also I was never told about.

One time I emailed the director out of being frustrated for working two sixteen-hour shifts with no breaks. I was told by the DON that I cannot contact the director. I must go through the proper chain of command.

After having a good catch that resulted in saving a resident's life. I emailed the DON about what happened with my lines of communication. I wanted to know what I did wrong, that I had to ask five

different nurses of my concern of this resident. I was told by her not to contact her again using my personal email and that I may have broken HIPPA by contacting her. She said to come find her when issues happened. I could not find her for a week. I guess she was on vacation. Was this ever told to us?

On 3-23-22 I was fired from the VA for not meeting the expectations of the job. This letter says that I had training and repeated counseling. My performance has not progressed to an acceptable level. I don't know what this means and I feel I deserve an explanation from someone. I applied for unemployment but was denied because I am now being accused of neglecting my duties.

If you want to know why these facilities are unable to keep workers, someone needs to look into these supervisors, managers and directors. They do nothing to help the workers, only tell people when they are doing things incorrectly. The communication at this facility is null, communication should be the number one priority to have a thriving, healthy working environment.

I know my situation, experience, will not change anything. The tyrants (Director, DON, Nurse Managers) all destroyed my life and my career as a CNA. I am now forced to work at a store as a cashier because the only other CNA jobs are over one hundred miles away.

Thank you for your time.

Samantha Shields