

Stuart woman says she was wrongfully fired for blowing whistle on facility

By Melissa E. Holsman

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STUART — A Stuart woman terminated in February from Tiffany Hall Nursing and Rehab Center is suing the Port St. Lucie facility for allegedly firing her in retaliation for advocating too strongly for residents who were complaining about their quality of care.

In her lawsuit, Cheryl Weinshank, 55, accuses Tiffany Hall and Sovereign Healthcare of Port St. Lucie LLC of violating Florida's Private Whistle Blower Act for terminating her after she contacted corporate officials with lists of complaints containing the names of residents, their family members and the name of employees suspected of ignoring federal regulations pertaining to patient care.

"Tiffany's managers and employees took retaliatory action against Weinshank by reprimanding her ... and terminating (her) because she assisted in the investigation of the patient and resident complaints alleging violations of law," her Hollywood attorney Dana M. Gallup wrote. "Weinshank has been damaged as a result of Tiffany's conduct."

She was hired as an admissions coordinator in July 2010, and was terminated Feb. 11, Gallup noted.

On Friday, West Palm Beach attorney Nicole Wall, who represents Tiffany Hall, declined to discuss the lawsuit.

"We don't comment on pending litigation," said Wall, of Cole, Scott and Kissane PA.

Weinshank, Gallup said, "loved her job" and is seeking compensation for lost wages, benefits and attorney fees.

"In a nutshell, Cheryl, I think, fashioned herself as a patient advocate or resident advocate," Gallup said. "Clearly she was liked by the residents and you had an administrator who was not — who was not a resident advocate and who didn't seem to appreciate this."

Weinshank's firing violated Florida law, Gallup argued, because she was terminated after she tried to help patients register complaints to corporate officials.

"If you ask her what's the reason you believe you were let go, and why you were treated this way," Gallup said, "she'll say 'because I stood up for the rights of the patients and the residents.' "



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