

## PRESS RELEASE

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### CONTACT

Sarah MacDonald, Legal Voice  
smaconnald@legalvoice.org  
206-682-9552 x107

Denise Diskin, Teller and Associates  
denise@stellerlaw.com  
206-324-8969



### Eastern Washington Hospital Settles Discrimination Suit, Agrees to Change Course and Treat Transgender Patients with Respect and Dignity

A Catholic hospital in Eastern Washington has settled claims brought by a transgender woman for the hospital's refusal to provide her gender-affirming medical care.

She had sought surgery from an experienced provider to whom she was referred by the Washington State Health Care Authority. But when she called to schedule her medical care, she was told that the hospital that employed that provider would not provide care to her because she was transgender, claiming religious reasons. When she sought help from hospital administration, she was told that her request would have to be reviewed by the local bishop and other religious leaders. Finally, she had to obtain care elsewhere, hours away from her home and family.

Legal Voice, a non-profit women's rights organization serving the five Northwest states, and Denise Diskin of Teller & Associates in Seattle, represented the woman denied care, asserting that the hospital's denial violated the Washington State Law Against Discrimination and other patient-protective laws. A settlement was reached in which Legal Voice's client will receive \$50,000, and the hospital will train its staff in providing appropriate, respectful care to transgender patients.

Legal Voice's client, who agreed as part of the settlement to keep her name and the hospital's identity confidential, explained, "**The fact that the hospital will be training their staff to properly treat and accommodate the LGBT community after this incident is of great importance to me. That is the real victory in all of this.**"

The treatment Legal Voice's client experienced is part of a broader trend of religious refusals, where people are denied access to safe, affordable health care due to their providers' moral or religious objections to the procedure or, as in this case, to the patient's gender identity.

**"We are very happy that our client will receive a measure of justice, and that this hospital will change course and ensure its compliance with Washington's law prohibiting discrimination," says David Ward, Legal & Legislative Counsel at Legal Voice. "We hope to see that kind of change in transgender health care throughout Washington State. All patients are entitled to respect and dignified care."**

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**Legal Voice** is a nonprofit women's rights legal organization that pursues justice for all women and girls in the Northwest through ground-breaking litigation, legislative advocacy, and educational tools to help individuals understand their rights. More at [www.legalvoice.org](http://www.legalvoice.org).

*Women's rights. Nothing less.*

907 Pine Street  
Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98101

T 206-682-9552  
F 206-682-9556

[LegalVoice.org](http://LegalVoice.org)