Sentosa Finally Sees Truth About Nurses Slowly Come to Light

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Woodmere, NY (PRWEB) May 13, 2008 -- With an increasing number of legal rulings and administrative decisions coming down in favor of Sentosa Care Group, the facts and truth about the nurses who walked off their jobs without proper notice nearly two years ago is steadily coming to light.

In January, the Philippine Department of Justice dismissed the charges of illegal recruitment filed against executives of Sentosa Recruitment Agency in the Philippines and Sentosa Care LLC in New York, saying, "There was no substantive alterations in the employment contracts signed by the complainants to sustain the findings of illegal recruitment." In February, the National Labor Relations Commission in Manila came to a similar conclusion, pointing out that the nurses failed to notify their employer when submitting resignations, something that was both a violation of their contracts as well as a violation of the Labor Code of the Philippines.

Even the decision by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, which originally ruled in favor of the nurses on the issue of contract substitution, reversed itself last September after finding that "what really happened, as admitted by the complainants themselves, was that they were actually transferred to other affiliated nursing facilities."

The matter also came before the United States Department of Justice, which likewise dismissed the charges of unfair immigration-related employment practices in August of 2007. In a letter to Sentosa attorneys, special deputy counsel of the U.S. DOJ Civil Rights Division, Katherine Baldwin said, "Based on its investigation, this office has determined that there is insufficient evidence of reasonable cause to believe the injured parties were discriminated against as prohibited by 8 U.S.C. §1324b."

"This string of rulings proves that our client was not engaged in any illegal practices," said Ibaro Relaminda Jr., Sentosa's attorney based in the Philippines. "It also proves that the nurses were lying in their statements about maltreatment."

With the unfurling of truth in case after case, support for the nurses and their attorney, Felix Vinluan, both in the U.S. and in the Philippines, is now beginning to buckle under the weight of the facts.

"The bottom line here is that there are hundreds of other nurses happy with their Sentosa Care links. They earn up to US $140,000 for nursing directors, a little less for supervisors, and so on," noted one blogger posting to Manila Bulletin Online.

The post went on to ask, "Is greed of a few going to spoil the chances of other Filipino nurses to find better and more stable jobs in New York through Sentosa Care?"

As recently as February 28th the Philippine Nurses Association-United States (PNA-US) voiced its concern about the deteriorating sense of responsibility cropping up among some Filipino nurses as a result of the growing number of opportunities to work abroad.
Sentosa is not the only recruitment agency faced with this issue. U.S. based Global Service Inc, filed a complaint with PNA-US last month complaining about Filipino nurses that breech their employment contracts without a work-related cause. "They simply choose to move to different locations to be near friends and family. This seems to be becoming more rampant as other nurses learn that they can break their employment agreements with no serious repercussions," wrote Global Service in its letter of complaint.

Executives at Sentosa Recruitment are quick to add that the vast majority of nurses recruited from the Philippines are the utmost caring and qualified professionals. However, it does agree with Global Service that without harsh repercussions for those rare few who attempt to work the system, hospitals, nursing facilities, patients and their loved ones will all suffer at the hands of a few ill-willed and misguided practitioners.

"Our case has always been about the advocating for the very best care possible for our patients and that is not going to stop," said Ben Philipson of Sentosa Care. "If that means pursuing justice on both sides of the Pacific. If it means prosecuting to the fullest extent of the law those caregivers and others who would do our patients harm intentionally or through negligence, then we will do just that."

Philipson continued saying, "Because we still firmly believe in the quality of training and capacity for concern found in the nurses we get from the Philippines we will continue to draw on that pool of candidates, supporting their transition to the states, both financially and culturally. But we are also going to do everything legally allowable to weed out and punish those who are not just damaging the reputation of Sentosa, but also the very good reputation that nurses from the Philippines have enjoyed until now."

That quest for the truth continues with the pending decision on the criminal trial brought by the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office* (against nurses who resigned en masse at a Smithtown, NY nursing home. Sentosa looks forward to seeing justice prevail there as well.

ABOUT SENTOSA RECRUITMENT AGENCY
Sentosa Recruitment Agency was formed by nurses, and for nurses who seek permanent employment in the United States. Its group of professional nurses, immigration specialists and attorneys assist applicants in the immigration and employment process. It also has representatives in different provinces around the Philippines to assist locally. Sentosa's immigration lawyers perform all filing, processing, and follow-ups with INS. The agency's overall mission is to provide a comprehensive solution to fulfill the needs of Filipino nurses.


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