



TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION 117

Affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

General Public and Private Sector Employees and Special Services Employees in King and Pierce Counties and Employees of the State of Washington

RECEIVED

FEB 25 2019

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

February 25, 2019

Mr. Bruce Dammeier
Pierce County Executive

Via Facsimile Transmittal
Fax # (253) 798-6628
Hard Copy To Follow

Re: Failure to Protect County Employees

Dear Mr. Dammeier or designee:

I, along with the below undersigned am writing you to express the concern that we have with the County failing to protect not only employees but the entire County from the ongoing violations and unethical practices in the medical examiner's office. Below is a list of violations employees have witnessed or been asked to be involved in, while not every violation is witnessed by every member, we are exercising our rights to protective concerted activity to have our voices heard. We formally inform you that we have no confidence in the work being performed by Dr. Thomas Clark and we have reason to believe that employees of the Medical Examiner's office will be retaliated against for writing this letter that exposes what we believe to be violations in the office.

These violations are not limited to, but include the following;

- Asking staff to tell him what type of exam (autopsy vs. external, etc.) a decedent needs – this falls outside of their scope of practice;
- Asking staff why they need to take sick time when they call out sick, as well as a history of following staff members who call out sick – this falls outside of the legal limits of what an employer can ask when an employee uses sick leave;
- Violation of protected medical/legal information for a staff member, this employees protected information got sent to all staff, as well as donation agencies, and other County employees in facilities, and IT;
- Instructing employees to only take pictures or x-rays of certain body parts or from certain angles, excluding pictures of details that are deemed "not pertinent" or supportive of Dr. Clark's findings;
- Instructing employees to not remove evidence, including bullet fragments, from decedents that could be prudent to the investigation;
- Failure to do autopsys on cases to include; drowning, bodies found outside, motor vehicle accidents, fires, water deaths, falls, gunshot wounds, and obese decedents;
- Failing to follow National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) standards;
- Falsifying reports to NAME to maintain accreditation;
- Refusing to allow employees to send fingerprints for positive ID and/or failing to scientifically identify homicides, decomposed decedents, or tentatively identified decedents, which is standard practice;
- Failure to do annual evaluations on employees;
- Organ and tissue donation is being prioritized over primary job functions of the employees;

Mr. Bruce Dammeier
Re: Failure to protect County Employees
February 25, 2019
Page 2 of 3

- A seemingly disproportionate number of external only examinations which result in such diagnosis of Ischemic heart disease, dilated cardiomyopathy, effects of chronic ethanol abuse, and other such general diagnosis without further study or supportive medical history;
- Failure to speak with decedents family members about exam findings, requiring staff without medical degrees to interpret death certificates or exam results, often of the above listed diagnosis, resulting in families who question the medical validity due to the decedent's lack of medical history or relevant diagnoses prior to death;
- Failure to discipline or address an employee's inappropriate behavior after multiple complaints have been filed, including unsafe situations, which has created a toxic and negative work environment that has significantly impacted morale and the feeling of safety at work;
- Cultivates an office culture where legitimate complaints are not addressed, where employees are encouraged to report insignificant mistakes to managers, as well as a culture where lower level employees are not able to speak about ongoing violations;
- Office policies and procedures are not updated regularly to be kept in agreement with current practices

We are seeking our workplace to be made safe by Dr. Thomas Clark being placed on leave pending the investigation into our complaints.

The employees hope that this matter can be discussed and settled. With this in mind, we would appreciate hearing from you, as soon as possible, to arrange a suitable meeting for a proper review of this issue. We would also be happy at that time to provide a list of several cases we believe were handled improperly and specific examples of the above listed complaints

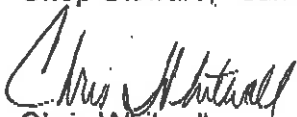
Sincerely,



Julie Yust
Union Representative, Teamsters 117



Patrick Glen
Shop Steward, Teamsters 117



Chris Whitwell
Member, Teamsters 117

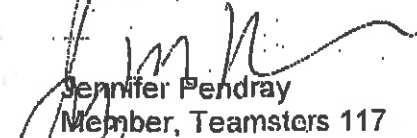
Mr. Bruce Dammeier
Re: Failure to protect County Employees
February 25, 2019
Page 3 of 3



Ryann Sale
Member, Teamsters 117



Jill Lombardi
Member, Teamsters 117

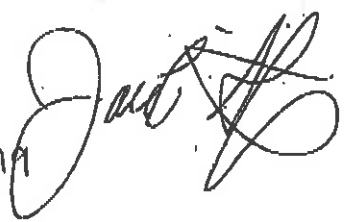


Jennifer Pendray
Member, Teamsters 117



Jacob Atzet
Member, Teamsters 117

JMP 2/23/19



Jennifer Phillips
Member, Teamsters 117

- cc: Joe Carillo, Deputy Director Labor Relations
- Scott Clifthorne, Teamsters 117
- Dave Morell, Pierce County Council District 1
- Pam Roach, Pierce County Council District 2
- Jim McCune, Pierce County Council District 3
- Connie Laidenburg, Pierce County Council District 4
- Marty Campbell, Pierce County Council District 5
- Douglas Richardson, Pierce County Council District 6
- Derek Young, Pierce County Council District 7