

# Denton County sued by EEOC for discrimination under the Equal Pay Act

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DALLAS – Denton County, Texas violated the Equal Pay Act by paying lesser wages to a female clinician than it paid to a male physician performing the same job, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed Sept. 6.



According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Dr. Martha C. Storrie worked as primary care clinician in the Denton County Health Department beginning in October 2008. The job duties of the primary care clinician were primarily to provide medical treatment and healthcare for Denton County residents in clinics run by the county, including a clinic in the Denton County jail. According to the EEOC, in August 2015, Denton County hired a male physician to perform the same duties and responsibilities as other staff working as a primary care clinician.

However, when the newly hired clinician was brought onboard as a colleague of Dr. Storrie's, the county set his starting annual salary at more than \$34,000 higher than his experienced female counterpart. The EEOC maintains that during her employment with Denton County, other male physicians in the position of primary care clinician and performing the same duties were also paid higher wages than Dr. Storrie.

Such alleged conduct violates the Equal Pay Act (EPA), which prohibits discrimination in compensation based on sex. The

EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, Sherman Division (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Denton County, Civil Action No. 4:17-CV-00614-ALM after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. The agency seeks back pay to remedy the pay disparity.

The EEOC is also seeking liquidated (double) damages for alleged willfulness on the part of the county, when management refused to correct the matter even after the female physician brought it to their attention. The civil rights agency is also asking for injunctive relief to promote non-discriminatory pay practices in the future.

“Energetically enforcing equal pay laws is a currently one the national strategic priorities for the EEOC,” said EEOC Regional Attorney Robert A. Canino. “In the health care field, just as in any other job market, the best medicine for employers ailing from poor pay practices is to remedy gender-based pay disparities that have been premised on outdated sex stereotypes. With over 1,000 EPA charges received in 2016, we have our work cut out for us in promoting equal economic opportunity in the workplace.”

EEOC Supervisory Trial Attorney Suzanne Anderson added, “Denton County failed to properly pay Dr. Storrie for her important work in providing medical care in the county clinics and the jail. The county’s approach to salaries resulted in a wage gap between Dr. Storrie and the male physicians that persisted throughout her long career with the county. The EEOC will continue to enforce compliance with the EPA to ensure that employees are paid equally when they perform equal work.”

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination.

For more information on the EEOC, [click here](#).

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