

“Look to the health care system for being at fault”—Health care workers continue to voice support for victimized nurse, RaDonda Vaught

Our reporters
4 April 2022

The WSWS is organizing the working class to defend RaDonda Vaught and all health care workers against victimization for the crisis of the for-profit health care system.

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Nurses and other workers continue to share their support for RaDonda Vaught, the former nurse from Nashville, Tennessee. Vaught was unjustly convicted of criminally negligent homicide on March 25 for making a medical error and now faces the prospect of years in prison.

Vaught readily admitted to her mistake. By contrast, her employer, the Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) in Nashville, Tennessee, first attempted to cover up the mistake and then, when it was revealed by an investigation by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the VUMC moved to completely scapegoat Vaught.

Below are some of the statements sent to the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Jamie, a nurse from Mississippi:

“As a nurse, my number one priority is my patients’ safety, and yet the organizations that hire us do not ensure safe practices, safeguards, safe nurse-to-patient ratios and adequate staffing to keep their patients safe. And people are dying and will continue to die until the organizations responsible are held accountable and are required to make necessary changes. I support Nurse

Vaught. I support patient and nurse advocacy.”

Maria, a health care worker in the United States:

“As a retired health care professional, reading the CMS statement of deficiencies, it is clear to me that Vanderbilt hospital didn’t have the bare minimum of systems for safe medication administration in place.

“A ‘float’ nurse on a high-intensity care unit. A flawed MAR, where nurses have to look ‘in two places’ to find orders. A failed automated medication dispensing system that leaves nurses without access to ordered medications so frequently that overrides are routine. No nurse/nurse check or nurse/pharmacist check on the override. A lack of bedside equipment. This outcome was inevitable.”

Janet from New York:

“Nurses work under very harsh conditions. Having 24 hours of tasks to do within a 12-hour shift is daunting. Pulling the wrong med off a shelf is inevitable under such a harsh workload. Criminalizing health care professionals won’t solve the problem. If hospitals had plenty of well-trained staff, patient outcomes would be better. We need more nursing and support staff and more training and college programs for health care staff. We need single payer health care! The profit moves the health care money to the wrong place: gargantuan hospital executive salaries, Big Pharma’s ridiculous profits, etc. Restore Ms. Vaught’s license NOW!”

Kara, a nurse in Illinois:

“I stand for nurses across the country. We don’t make enough money to essentially put my life on the line. An error that was not done in malice does not

deserve jail time. We plead for leniency in sentencing.”

Mary from Tennessee:

“RaDonda reported the incident following protocol as she stated. If the Med had not been available (even with an override available), a nurse should not have access. Why was V’bilt using an accu system that was not working proper? She was thrown under the train for multiple errors of multiple people.”

Elizabeth, a nurse in Delaware:

“How can the hospital have no consequence and the nurse have all of the burden? They, as her employer, put her in this situation to begin with. I don’t know ANY nurse that hasn’t made a med error at least once in their career. We learn what situations to look out for and prevent every time we report these errors. After this, I don’t think I’d ever work for another hospital. (Sure, they ALL say ‘patients are #1’ but we ALL know what’s #1 ... MONEY).

“They cut costs constantly through not fixing or replacing equipment, not replacing staff and underpaying the ones they have. The training is less than optimal because they don’t have enough staff to train new hires correctly. They ‘let go’ of experienced nurses, to save money by hiring NEW grads who have no seasoned nurses to learn from. We KNOW where the cost savings go to Bonuses to the CEO, etc. for ‘making necessary cuts to preserve the bottom line.’ They’ll spend money on new ad campaigns, new logos, etc. All the while telling you ‘you’ll just have to do more with less.’ Patients need to know this!

“Accountability lies at the feet of the BIG boss. Why didn’t the CEO get charged? Why didn’t the hospital get fined? Why didn’t they support their staff? ... Why would ANYONE, patient or health care worker, TRUST this hospital? ... This just isn’t right.”

Amanda from New York:

“Humans make errors. RaDonda did the right thing in reporting her error, errors are unfortunate, but they do happen. She should not be criminally charged with an error that occurred as partly in fault by her employer! Nurses are working short staffed, overworked, and underpaid. We will not let her be charged! We will fight back! Stay strong, sis!”

Bob from Rhode Island:

“I am writing to demand that clemency be granted to RaDonda Vaught. Criminalizing an inadvertent error made by a medical professional like Ms. Vaught sets a

dangerous precedent.”

Ashley, a nurse from New York:

“RN from NYS showing my nursing sister support in the unimaginable circumstance of one of us being prosecuted for an error. Please stay strong and know we love you, support you, and will always be a fellow nurse.”

Tamara:

“I think the prosecutors themselves need jail time, and they need to be locked up for their inability to see clearly. Perhaps the jail time will give them time to convert to being human. They most definitely painted a gruesome picture about this RN who is a human and not a machine.

“It is criminal that these facilities and hospitals overload nurses and caregivers. They are careless about your circumstances. They push you to do hard [work], though by law you must take a break. They know it’s not possible most of the time, and then the supervisor will say, ‘I’m going to write you up for not taking a break’! They break the law all the time in an effort to make more money. The raise you get is like 50 cents. All I can say is look to the health care system for being at fault. Their greed and true lack of support is rampant.”



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