

Long Island doctor mocked employee for having cancer and fired her when she complained: lawsuit

EXCLUSIVE: Hilda Mayer, 47, is suing Dr. Michael Brisman, who's the CEO of Neurological Surgery in Rockville Centre, Long Island. Brisman is accused of belittling Mayer for her disease, and then griping when her treatments caused insurance premiums to increase. Mayer says she was fired when she complained about the way Brisman had treated her.

BY [DAREH GREGORIAN](#) // NEW YORK DAILY NEWS // Thursday, February 19, 2015, 2:30 AM



Hilda Mayer says she was fired for complaining about her boss.

Her brain surgeon boss didn't have much of a heart.

A woman who worked at Neurological Surgery in Long Island says her doctor boss tormented her after she got cancer, and then fired her when she complained about the sickening treatment.

"He just belittled me," Hilda Mayer, 47, said of Neurological Surgery CEO Michael Brisman. "It was very difficult."

In papers filed in Brooklyn Federal Court Wednesday, the divorced mother of two said Brisman was obsessed with keeping employee health care costs down at his clinics — he'd once complained at a staff meeting about the cost of having an employee who gave birth to premature twins.

So when the marketing rep was diagnosed with stage-three cancer in December 2013, she said she was “worried” about telling him about her condition.

The suit says she was right to be concerned — after she told her boss of six years her devastating news and asked him to keep it confidential, word spread around their Rockville Centre office like “wildfire.”

“Within two weeks, everyone in the office knew,” Mayer told the Daily News. Soon everyone in the high-end surgery group’s other offices knew as well.

“I couldn’t walk into a place where I didn’t feel like I had ‘cancer’ tattooed on my forehead,” she said.



Dr. Michael Brisman has been slapped with a lawsuit that accuses him of mocking a former employee because she had cancer. He also allegedly fired her when she complained about the harsh treatment.

Brisman “openly mocked Ms. Mayer for her disease” and “blamed her throughout the office for causing the company’s insurance premiums to increase,” the suit says.

She underwent surgery in April 2014, and was back on chemo that May, when her hair started falling out.

Brisman, she said, told her to wear a wig because her thinning hair was making “other people uncomfortable,” the suit says.

She said she'd never heard any complaints from any of her colleagues. "More likely, the only person uncomfortable was Dr. Brisman himself," the suit says.

She followed his direction — and at their next staff meeting, Brisman said she "looked good" — "just like one of those Hasidic girls from Williamsburg," Mayer recalled.

"It was a joke to him, but humiliating to me," she said.

She had another surgery in July, and said Brisman complained the office insurance premiums were going up because of her.



Hilda Mayer worked in the marketing department at Neurological Surgery in Rockville Center, Long Island.

When she needed time off for a third round of chemotherapy last October, the doctor snapped, "When is enough enough?" the suit says. "You know who pays for it?" he said, pointing to his pocket. "I do!"

She complained about the comments repeatedly, but was ignored until she hired a lawyer in December.

Brisman, she said, told her she was overreacting. "I think it's your medication or you're taking new meds," he said, according to the suit.

The Roslyn woman was fired weeks later, one of four people who were let go in a "reorganization" of the marketing department. The suit says the firing was actually retaliation for her complaints. It seeks unspecified money damages.

"Our feeling is none of these claims are true," Brisman said Wednesday.

Mayer's lawyer, David Gottlieb of Wigdor LP, said the suit should "send a message to all employers that this is an unacceptable way to treat employees."

Mayer declined to say what kind of cancer she had, but said she is now in remission. "I'm looking for a job," she said.