Wigdor LLP Represents Six Female Doctors In Sexual Harassment Lawsuit Against Yale University And Yale New Haven Hospital

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On Wednesday, March 11, 2020, Wigdor LLP filed a lawsuit against Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital, Inc. (together, "Yale") on behalf of six female doctors who allege that they were all victims of alleged sexual misconduct at the hands of Manuel Lopes Fontes, M.D.

The six Plaintiffs are all highly accomplished, dedicated and well-respected doctors within Yale's Department of Anesthesiology. The lawsuit alleges that all six women were sexually harassed and/or sexually assaulted by their supervisor Dr. Fontes, who is a Professor of Anesthesiology at Yale and is also named as a defendant in the lawsuit.

Incredibly, *after* Yale received several complaints that Dr. Fontes had sexually harassed and acted inappropriately towards multiple subordinates, including some of the Plaintiffs, Dr. Fontes was promoted to serve as the Anesthesiology Department's Vice Chair of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, according to the Complaint.

The Complaint outlines a broad pattern of Dr. Fontes's sexually harassing and discriminatory behavior towards Plaintiffs and other female subordinates, including forcible kissing, making inappropriate comments about their bodies, unwanted touching, and retaliating against subordinates for rejecting his advances. The Complaint also alleges that Dr. Fontes even discriminated against one Plaintiff based on her pregnancy and retaliated against her for raising complaints of pregnancy discrimination by banning her from working in the Intensive Care Unit, or ICU.

As alleged, Plaintiffs submitted multiple complaints to Yale about Dr. Fontes's sexually harassing behavior, but nothing was done to remedy the misconduct and, in fact, Dr. Fontes continued to sexually harass the Plaintiffs and actively mocked them for making complaints.

As set forth in the Complaint, Yale has a troubling history of doing little to address or prevent sexual harassment and misconduct committed against female subordinates by male doctors in positions of power. Moreover, a recent survey by the Association of American Universities found that Yale has a substantially higher than average rate of sexual harassment as compared to other similar institutions, according to the lawsuit.

> A Yale doctor was named a "diversity and inclusion" chair despite being accused of sexual harassment, a lawsuit says. https://t.co/H20yazsIxD
> — NBC News (@NBCNews) March 12, 2020

Plaintiffs are represented by Wigdor LLP Founding Partner Douglas H. Wigdor, Partner Michael J. Willemin, and Madsen, Prestley and Parenteau, LLC Partner Todd D. Steigman.

Statement from Michael J. Willemin:

> "Sexual harassment has no place in medicine or higher education, and Yale University, one of the most prestigious universities in the world, is not above being held accountable for its alleged history of protecting powerful male doctors at the expense of its female employees and students. It is truly shocking that Yale would promote Dr. Fontes to lead the Anesthesiology Department's diversity and inclusion efforts *after* it received multiple complaints about his sexually harassing behavior and other misconduct towards female subordinates. At a time like now where focus on our healthcare system is even more intensified, our six clients, who are all highly accomplished doctors, should be able to do their jobs without fear that they will be sexually harassed by their supervisor or suffer professionally for rejecting or complaining about his advances. We look forward to vindicating our clients' rights in court."

Read the Full Complaint Here

NBC News
"Yale doctor was named 'diversity and inclusion' chair after being accused of sexual harassment, lawsuit says"
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U.S. News & World Report
"Suit: Female Physicians Assaulted, Harassed by Yale Doctor"
March 12, 2020
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The Daily Beast
"Yale Professor Promoted After Being Accused of Sexual Harassment: Lawsuit"
March 12, 2020
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International Business Times
"Doctor Accused Of Sexual Harassment Promoted By Yale University Despite Complaints"
March 13, 2020
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Becker's Hospital Review
"6 physicians sue Yale anesthesiologist, accused of sexual harassment"
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Yale Daily News
"Doctors sue anesthesiology professor for alleged sexual misconduct"
March 21, 2020
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New York Daily News
"Yale promoted university doctor to lead inclusion and diversity efforts despite sexual harassment complaints, according to new suit"
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Connecticut Law Tribune
"6 Yale Doctors Claim 'Troubling Pattern' of Silencing Sexual Misconduct Complaints"
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Law360
"Yale Accused Of Ignoring Sex Abuse Claims Against Top Doc"
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Daily Mail
"Yale doctor who 'sexually harassed a female colleague' was promoted to top job after bosses brushed off complaints saying 'boys will be boys' – as five more women come forward in lawsuit against the university"
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Bloomberg Law
"Yale University, Hospital Sued by Doctors for Sex Harassment"
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