

A professor with a heart condition is suing her university, saying they won't let her work from home even though she can't get vaccinated

[insider.com/professor-with-heart-condition-sues-university-allow-work-from-home-2021-7](https://www.insider.com/professor-with-heart-condition-sues-university-allow-work-from-home-2021-7)

Kelsie Sandoval Jul 19, 2021, 12:23 PM

- South University required faculty to return to the campus in the spring.
- Dr. Elizabeth Kostal's request to work remotely because of her disabilities got denied.
- Kostal is now suing the university, alleging a breach of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A university professor is suing her employer, saying the decision to not let her work remotely is a breach of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Dr. Elizabeth Kostal, 48, has asthma and chronic heart issues, two conditions that increase the risk of contracting severe COVID-19. Kostal says she can't get the COVID-19 vaccine because she's had a history of adverse reactions to other vaccines, one of which includes inflammation of the heart muscle.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Kostal, an associate professor of nursing and health sciences at South University in Virginia Beach, taught her students virtually from home.

In the spring, however, university employees had to return to campus.

Kostal requested to work from home, citing that she's an American with a disability, but the university did not approve of her request, saying her disabilities did not qualify her for remote work.

Back at work, Kostal said she was nervous working with nursing students, who may have contact with COVID-19 patients. "The risks that I was undergoing was 100% unnecessary. It's not just that I'm trying to mitigate risks, I'm trying to preserve my life," Kostal told Insider.

Kostal's lawyer, Christine Hogan, filed a complaint with the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on Kostal's behalf.

Since filing her lawsuit, Kostal is temporarily allowed to work from home. Kostal said the university plans to revisit this arrangement in 30 days, and the uncertainty consumes her.

"I don't sleep well, I don't eat well. I'm thinking about it all the time, because, you know, my future is uncertain for me in many regards," Kostal told Insider.

South University did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

