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**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF KERN**

JOSE SERRANO, an individual, on behalf of
himself, the State of California, as a private
attorney general, and on behalf of all others
similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

HOFFMAN HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY, INC,
a California Non-profit; HOFFMAN HOSPICE
HOME FOUNDATION, a California Non-
profit; and DOES 1 TO 50,

Defendants.

Case No.: BCV-22-101016

**Settlement Agreement and Release of Class
Action**

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1 **SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE OF CLASS ACTION**

2 This Settlement Agreement and Release of Class Action (“Settlement Agreement”) is made and
3 entered into by: **(1)** Plaintiff Jose Serrano (“Plaintiff”), individually and in his representative capacity
4 on behalf of the Settlement Class, as defined below, and as a private attorney general on behalf of the
5 State of California; and **(2)** Defendant HOFFMANN HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY, INC
6 (“Defendant”). Plaintiff and Defendant are collectively referred to herein as the “Parties.” This
7 Settlement Agreement is subject to the approval of the Court, pursuant to California Rules of Court,
8 rule 3.769, subdivisions (c), (d), and (e), and is made for the sole purpose of attempting to consummate
9 settlement of the action on a class-wide basis subject to the following terms and conditions. As detailed
10 below, if the Court does not enter an order granting final approval of this Settlement Agreement or the
11 conditions precedent are not met for any reason, this Settlement Agreement is void and of no force or
12 effect whatsoever.

13 **1. DEFINITIONS**

14 As used in this Settlement Agreement, the following terms shall have the meanings specified
15 below. To the extent terms or phrases used in this Settlement Agreement are not specifically defined
16 below, but are defined elsewhere in this Settlement Agreement, they are incorporated by reference into
17 this definition section.

18 **1.1. ACTION**

19 “Action” shall mean the following civil action: *Jose Gonzalez Serrano v. Hoffman Hospice of*
20 *the Valley, Inc., et al.*, case number BCV-22-101016, currently pending before the Superior Court of
21 the State of California for the County of Kern.

22 **1.2. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES**

23 “Administrative Expenses” shall include all costs and expenses associated with and paid to the
24 third-party settlement administrator, which are estimated not to exceed \$7,000.00.

25 **1.3. APPLICABLE WAGE ORDER**

26 “Applicable Wage Order” shall mean the California Industrial Welfare Commission (“IWC”)
27 Wage Order applicable to the facts of this case, including IWC Wage Order 5-2001 and others that
28 may be applicable. (Cal. Code of Regs., tit. 8, § 11050.)

1 **1.4. CLAIMS**

2 “Claims” shall mean the claims asserted in the Action.

3 **1.5. CLASS ATTORNEY FEES AND EXPENSES**

4 “Class Attorney Fees and Expenses” shall mean the portion of the Gross Settlement Amount
5 attributable to attorney fees and litigation expenses. The Parties agree that the fee-portion of the Class
6 Attorney Fees and Expenses shall be up to one-third of the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$32,916.67),
7 as approved by the Court, and the award of costs and expenses shall be up to an additional \$10,000.00.
8 If the Escalator Provision described below is triggered so as to increase the Gross Settlement Amount,
9 the Parties agree that the fee portion of the Class Attorney Fees and Expenses will increase
10 proportionally such that the total amount of attorneys’ fees remains one-third of the Gross Settlement
11 Amount *after* the upward adjustment required by the Escalator Provision is implemented.

12 **1.6. CLASS COUNSEL**

13 “Class Counsel” shall mean Jonathan Melmed, Megan Ross and Hannah Becker of Melmed
14 Law Group P.C.

15 **1.7. CLASS MEMBER**

16 “Class Member” shall mean any person who is a prospective member of the Settlement Class,
17 or, if such person is incompetent or deceased, the person’s legal guardian, executor, heir, or successor-
18 in-interest.

19 **1.8. CLASS NOTICE**

20 “Class Notice” shall mean the *Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement*, as set forth in the
21 form of **Exhibit 1** attached hereto, or as otherwise approved by the Court, which is to be mailed to
22 Class Members along with the Share Form.

23 **1.9. CLASS PARTICIPANTS**

24 “Class Participants” shall mean all Class Members who do not timely request exclusion from
25 the Class Settlement.

26 **1.10. CLASS PERIOD**

27 “Class Period” shall mean the period from April 27, 2018, through the later of: March 13, 2023
28 or the date of preliminary approval of the settlement.

1 **1.11. CLASS REPRESENTATIVE**

2 “Class Representative” shall mean Plaintiff Jose Gonzalez Serrano.

3 **1.12. CLASS SETTLEMENT**

4 “Class Settlement” shall mean the settlement embodied in this Settlement Agreement, which is
5 subject to Court approval.

6 **1.13. COMPLAINT**

7 “Complaint” shall mean the currently-operative complaint in the Action.

8 **1.14. COURT**

9 “Court” shall mean the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Kern.

10 **1.15. DEFENDANT**

11 “Defendant” shall mean Defendant Hoffmann Hospice of the Valley, Inc.

12 **1.16. DEFENSE COUNSEL**

13 “Defense Counsel” shall mean the attorneys of record representing Defendant in the Action.

14 **1.17. EFFECTIVE DATE**

15 “Effective Date” shall be the date when all of the following events have occurred: **(a)** this
16 Settlement Agreement has been executed by all Parties and by Class Counsel and Defense Counsel;
17 **(b)** the Court has given preliminary approval to the Class Settlement; **(c)** notice has been given to the
18 Settlement Class providing them with an opportunity to request exclusion from the Class Settlement;
19 **(d)** the Court has held a Final Approval and Fairness Hearing and entered a final order and judgment
20 certifying the Settlement Class and approving this Settlement Agreement; and **(e)** the later of the
21 following events: **(i)** the expiration of the period for filing any appeal, writ, or other appellate
22 proceeding opposing the Class Settlement has elapsed without any appeal, writ, or other appellate
23 proceeding having been filed; **(ii)** the dismissal of any appeal, writ, or other appellate proceeding
24 opposing the Class Settlement with no right to pursue further remedies or relief; or **(iii)** any appeal,
25 writ, or the issuance of such other final appellate order upholding the Court’s final order with no right
26 to pursue further remedies or relief. In the event there is a timely filed motion to set aside judgment or
27 to intervene, the expiration of the period for filing any appeal, writ, or other appellate proceeding
28 opposing the Class Settlement will be based on the later of the court’s ruling or order on any such

1 motion or entry of final order and judgment certifying the class and approving this Stipulation. In this
2 regard, it is the intention of the Parties that the Class Settlement shall not become effective until the
3 Court's order approving the Class Settlement is completely final and there is no further recourse by an
4 appellant or objector who seeks to contest the Class Settlement.

5 **1.18. FINAL APPROVAL AND FAIRNESS HEARING**

6 "Final Approval and Fairness Hearing" shall mean the final hearing held to ascertain the
7 fairness, reasonableness, and adequacy of the Class Settlement.

8 **1.19. GROSS SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

9 "Gross Settlement Amount" is the agreed upon non-reversionary settlement amount totaling
10 \$98,750.00 to be paid by Defendant in full settlement of the Released Claims asserted in this case,
11 inclusive of the Administrative Expenses, the Class Attorney Fees and Expenses, the Incentive Award,
12 and PAGA Payment.

13 **1.20. HEARING ON PRELIMINARY APPROVAL**

14 "Hearing on Preliminary Approval" shall mean the hearing held on the motion for preliminary
15 approval of the Class Settlement.

16 **1.21. INCENTIVE AWARD**

17 "Incentive Award" shall mean any additional monetary payment provided to the Class
18 Representative for his efforts and risks on behalf of the Settlement Class in this Action.

19 **1.22. INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

20 "Individual Settlement Amount" shall mean the amount which is ultimately distributed to each
21 Class Participant. The Individual Settlement Amount does not include any portion of the PAGA
22 Payment.

23 **1.23. NET SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

24 "Net Settlement Amount" shall mean the Gross Settlement Amount minus: Administrative
25 Expenses; Class Attorney Fees and Expenses; the share of the Gross Settlement Amount allocated
26 toward penalties pursuant to the Labor Code Private Attorney General Act of 2004 ("PAGA"), codified
27 at Labor Code sections 2698 through 2699.6; and Plaintiff's Incentive Award.
28

1 **1.24. OPT OUT**

2 “Opt Out” shall refer to the process of submitting a timely and valid request for exclusion from
3 the Class Settlement in accordance with the terms of the Class Notice and no later than the Response
4 Deadline.

5 **1.25. OPT-OUTS**

6 “Opt-Outs” shall mean all persons who timely and validly request exclusion from the Class
7 Settlement in accordance with the terms of the Class Notice and no later than the Response Deadline.

8 **1.26. PAGA PAYMENT**

9 “PAGA Payment” means the penalties pursuant to PAGA that the Parties have agreed is a
10 reasonable sum to be paid in settlement of the PAGA claims included in the Action, which is \$5,000.00.
11 The PAGA Payment is to be approved by the Court pursuant to Labor Code section 2699 and is to be
12 distributed as follows: seventy-five percent (75%) (i.e., \$3,750.00) to the Labor and Workforce
13 Development Agency (“LWDA”) and twenty-five percent (25%) (i.e., \$1,250.00) to the PAGA
14 Settlement Class. Class Counsel shall give timely notice of this Settlement Agreement to the LWDA
15 pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, subdivision (l)(2).

16 **1.27. PAGA PERIOD**

17 “PAGA Period” shall mean the period from April 27, 2021, through the later of: March 13,
18 2023 or the date of preliminary approval of the settlement.

19 **1.28. PAGA SETTLEMENT CLASS**

20 “PAGA Settlement Class” shall mean all individuals who are or were employed by Defendant
21 in California during the PAGA Period. Defendant represents that the PAGA Settlement Class
22 consists of approximately 261 employees that worked a total of approximately 6,387 pay periods
23 during the PAGA Period.

24 **1.29. PARTIES**

25 “Parties” shall mean Plaintiff and Defendant.

26 **1.30. PLAINTIFF**

27 “Plaintiff” shall mean Plaintiff Jose Gonzalez Serrano.
28

1 **1.31. PRELIMINARY APPROVAL DATE**

2 “Preliminary Approval Date” shall mean the date upon which the Court enters an order
3 preliminarily approving this Settlement Agreement.

4 **1.32. RELEASED CLAIMS**

5 “Released Claims” shall mean those claims, rights, and causes of action arising out of or related
6 to the facts, allegations, or legal theories set forth in the Complaint or Plaintiff’s PAGA notice to the
7 LWDA, which arose during the Class Period, including claims for: **(1)** failure to reimburse business
8 expenses in violation of Labor Code sections 2800, 2802, and 2804; **(2)** deceptive, fraudulent, or
9 otherwise unlawful business practices based on the foregoing in violation of California’s Unfair
10 Competition Law (Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 17200–17210); **(3)** statutory penalties based on the foregoing
11 pursuant to PAGA (Lab. Code, §§ 2698–2699.6); and **(4)** all claims for liquidated damages, penalties,
12 interest, fees, and costs based on the foregoing.

13 This Settlement Agreement will not release any person, party, or entity from claims, if any, by
14 Class Members for workers compensation, unemployment, or disability benefits of any nature. Nor
15 does it release any claims, actions, or causes of action which may be possessed by Class Members
16 under state or federal discrimination statutes, including, without limitation, the California Fair
17 Employment and Housing Act (Gov. Code, §§ 12900–12996); the Unruh Civil Rights Act (Civ. Code,
18 § 51); the California Constitution; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000, et seq.);
19 the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.); the Employee Retirement Income
20 Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1001 et seq.); and all of their implementing regulations and
21 interpretive guidelines.

22 The Parties hereto, including the Class Participants, also stipulate and agree that the
23 consideration paid to the Class Participants pursuant to this Settlement Agreement fully compensates
24 for all damages and penalties due to them in connection with the Released Claims, along with all
25 liability for derivative pay period violations and any related penalties, including civil penalties under
26 PAGA related to any of the claims asserted by Plaintiff in the Action. Accordingly, Defendant cannot
27 be held liable henceforth for any penalties pursuant to PAGA relating the Released Claims, and the
28 Parties hereto, including Class Participants, stipulate and agree that, following the payments made

1 pursuant to this Agreement, the Class Participants will no longer be “aggrieved employees” for
2 purposes of the PAGA as it relates to the Released Claims. In addition, the Parties, including the Class
3 Participants, further stipulate and agree that even if any Class Participant is determined to be an
4 “aggrieved employee” for purposes of PAGA as it relates to the Released Claims, said Class Participant
5 waives any potential right to any individual relief or penalty prescribed by PAGA relating to the
6 Released Claims.

7 **1.33. RELEASED PARTIES**

8 “Released Parties” shall mean Defendant and all of its current, former, or future parent
9 companies, subsidiary companies or related companies, partnerships, joint ventures, and, with respect
10 to each of them, all their predecessors and successors, and all of their past, present, and future
11 employees, officers, partners, principals, directors, stockholders, owners, representatives, assigns,
12 attorneys, agents, insurers, and any other persons acting by, through, under, or in concert with any of
13 the persons or entities listed herein and their successors and any individual or entity who could be liable
14 for any of the Released Claims. Hoffmann Hospice Home Foundation is a Released Party

15 **1.34. RELEASING PARTIES**

16 “Releasing Parties” shall mean every Class Participant and all persons purporting to act on their
17 behalf or purporting to assert a claim under or through them, including, but not limited to, their
18 dependents, heirs, assigns, beneficiaries, devisees, legatees, executors, administrators, agents, trustees,
19 conservators, guardians, personal representatives, and successors-in-interest, whether individual, class,
20 representative, legal, equitable, direct or indirect, or any other type or in any other capacity.

21 **1.35. RESPONSE DEADLINE**

22 “Response Deadline” shall mean the date forty-five (45) days following the date on which the
23 Settlement Administrator first mails Class Notice to the Class Members and the last day on which Class
24 Members may submit a request for exclusion and/or objection to Class Settlement.

25 **1.36. SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATOR**

26 “Settlement Administrator” shall mean ILYM Group, Inc. (or other administrator agreed on by
27 the parties) which the Parties have agreed will be responsible for administration of the Class Settlement
28 and related matters.

1 **1.37. SETTLEMENT CLASS**

2 “Settlement Class” shall mean all individuals who are or were employed by Defendant in
3 California during the Class Period. Defendant represents that the Settlement Class consists
4 of approximately 418 Class Members that worked a total of approximately 16,962 pay periods
5 during the Class Period.

6 **1.38. SHARE FORM**

7 “Share Form” shall mean the *Class Action Settlement Share Form*, as set forth in the form of
8 **Exhibit 2** attached hereto, or as otherwise approved by the Court, which is to be mailed to Class
9 Members along with the Class Notice.

10 **2. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND**

11 **2.1. PLAINTIFF’S CLAIMS**

12 Plaintiff, individually and in his representative capacity on behalf of the Settlement Class, and
13 as a private attorney general on behalf of the State of California, has alleged the following violations:
14 **(1)** failure to reimburse business expenses in violation of Labor Code sections 2802 and 2804;
15 **(2)** deceptive, fraudulent, or otherwise unlawful business practices based on the foregoing in violation
16 of California’s Unfair Competition Law (Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 17200–17210); and **(3)** statutory
17 penalties based on the foregoing pursuant to PAGA (Lab. Code, §§ 2698–2699.6).

18 **2.2. DISCOVERY, INVESTIGATION, RESEARCH, AND MEDIATION**

19 Class Counsel has conducted significant informal discovery during the prosecution of the
20 Action. This discovery, investigation, and prosecution has included, among other things, **(a)** over a
21 dozen telephonic conferences with Plaintiff; **(b)** inspection and analysis of hundreds of pages of
22 documents and other information produced by Plaintiff and Defendant; **(c)** analysis of employment
23 data from a sample of Class Members; **(d)** an analysis of the legal positions taken by Defendant;
24 **(d)** investigation into the viability of class treatment of the claims asserted in the Action; **(e)** analysis
25 of potential class-wide damages, including information sufficient to understand Defendant’s potential
26 defenses to Plaintiff’s claims; **(f)** research of the applicable law with respect to the claims asserted in
27 the Complaint and the potential defenses thereto; and **(g)** assembling and analyzing of data for
28 calculating damages.

1 Class Counsel and the Class Representative have vigorously prosecuted this case, and
2 Defendant has vigorously contested it. The Parties have engaged in sufficient investigation and
3 discovery to assess the relative merits of the claims of the Class Representative and of the defenses to
4 them. After such discovery, investigation, and prosecution, the Parties attended a full-day mediation
5 with an experienced employment law mediator, which culminated in a settlement in principle, the terms
6 of which are elaborated in this Settlement Agreement.

7 **2.3. ALLEGATIONS OF THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE AND BENEFITS OF**
8 **CLASS SETTLEMENT**

9 The document and data exchange in this matter, as well as discussions between counsel, have
10 been adequate to give the Class Representative and Class Counsel a sound understanding of the merits
11 of their positions and to evaluate the value of the claims of the Settlement Class. The informal discovery
12 conducted in this Action and the information exchanged by the Parties through pre-mediation
13 discussions are sufficient to reliably assess the merits of the Parties' respective positions and to
14 compromise the issues on a fair and equitable basis.

15 The Class Representative and Class Counsel believe that the claims, causes of action,
16 allegations, and contentions asserted in the Action have merit. However, the Class Representative and
17 Class Counsel recognize and acknowledge the expense and delay of continued lengthy proceedings
18 necessary to prosecute the Action against Defendant through trial and through appeals. Class Counsel
19 has taken into account the uncertain outcome of the litigation, the risk of continued litigation in complex
20 actions such as this, as well as the difficulties and delays inherent in such litigation, and the potential
21 difficulty of obtaining certification of the Settlement Class as well as trying the claims of the class.
22 Class Counsel is mindful of the potential problems of proof under, and possible defenses to, the claims
23 alleged in the Action.

24 The Class Representative and Class Counsel believe that the settlement set forth in this
25 Settlement Agreement confers substantial benefits upon Plaintiff and the Settlement Class and that an
26 independent review of this Settlement Agreement by the Court in the approval process will confirm
27 this conclusion. Based on their own independent investigation and evaluation, Class Counsel has
28

determined that the settlement set forth in this Settlement Agreement is in the best interests of Plaintiff and the Class Members.

2.4. DEFENDANT'S DENIALS OF WRONGDOING AND LIABILITY

Defendant has denied and continues to deny all allegations, claims, and contentions alleged by Plaintiff in the Action. Defendant has expressly denied and continues to deny all charges of wrongdoing or liability against it arising out of any of the conduct, statements, acts, or omissions alleged in the Action. Defendant contends that it complied with California and federal wage and hour laws and has dealt legally and fairly with Plaintiff and the Class Members.

Defendant further denies that, for any purpose other than settling this Action, these claims are appropriate for class or representative treatment. Nonetheless, Defendant has concluded that further proceedings in the Action would be protracted and expensive and that it is desirable that the Action be fully and finally settled in the manner and upon the terms and conditions set forth in this Settlement Agreement to dispose of burdensome and protracted litigation, to permit the operation of Defendant's respective businesses without further expensive litigation and the distraction and diversion of their personnel with respect to matters at issue in the Action. Defendant has also taken into account the uncertainty and risks inherent in any litigation, especially in complex cases such as the Action. Defendant has, therefore, determined that it is desirable and beneficial to it that the Action be settled in the manner and upon the terms and conditions set forth in this Settlement Agreement.

2.5. INTENT OF THE CLASS SETTLEMENT

The Class Settlement set forth herein intends to achieve the following: **(1)** entry of an order approving the Class Settlement; **(2)** entry of judgment of the Action; **(3)** discharge of the Released Parties from liability for any and all of the Released Claims; and **(4)** discharge of Defendant from liability for any and all claims arising out of the Action.

3. CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION OF THE SETTLEMENT CLASS

For the purposes of this Settlement Agreement and the Class Settlement of this Action only, the Parties agree to conditional class certification of the Settlement Class. Defense Counsel believes this conditional certification is appropriate because the Released Claims are being compromised without need to establish the elements of those claims on which liability turns. The certification of the

1 Settlement Class shall not constitute, in this or any other proceeding, an admission of any kind by
2 Defendant, including without limitation, that certification of a class for trial purposes is or would be
3 warranted, appropriate or proper; or that Plaintiff could establish any of the requisite elements for class
4 treatment of any of the claims in the Action.

5 If the Settlement Agreement is not finally approved by the Court, the Effective Date is not
6 achieved, or the Class Settlement is rejected, terminated, or otherwise rendered null and void as set
7 forth herein, then certification of the Settlement Class shall be automatically vacated, shall be void *ab*
8 *initio*, of no force or effect, and shall not constitute evidence or a binding determination that the
9 requirements for certification of a class for trial purposes in this Action or in any other action which
10 have been, are or can be, satisfied. Further, if the Agreement does not reach the Effective Date, Plaintiff
11 agrees that Plaintiff will not argue, claim, reference, or otherwise raise any preliminary approval of the
12 Settlement Class in connection with any later proceeding before the Court.

13 **4. APPOINTMENT OF CLASS COUNSEL**

14 For purposes of this Settlement Agreement and subject to the Court's approval, the Parties agree
15 to the appointment of Class Counsel as counsel for the Settlement Class and the effectuation of the
16 Class Settlement pursuant to this Settlement Agreement.

17 **5. CONSIDERATION**

18 **5.1. SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

19 The Parties agree to settle this Action for the Gross Settlement Amount of \$98,750.00. There
20 shall be no reversion to Defendant. Defendant shall pay the Gross Settlement Amount in full. The Gross
21 Settlement Amount and other actions and forbearances taken by Defendant shall constitute adequate
22 consideration for the Class Settlement and will be made in full and final settlement of: the Released
23 Claims, the Class Attorney Fees and Expenses, Administrative Expenses, the Incentive Award, the
24 PAGA Payment (and any payments to individual PAGA Class Members resulting from the PAGA
25 Payment), and any other obligation of Defendant under this Settlement Agreement.

26 After the Court issues an order preliminarily approving this Class Settlement, the Settlement
27 Administrator will distribute the Class Notice to the Class Members, which shall describe the terms of
28 the Class Settlement and procedures to Opt Out, object, or participate in the Class Settlement as well

1 as the Share Form, which shall identify the Class Member, the number of pay periods worked by each
2 Class Member (“Pay Periods”), as well as the estimated amount of the Individual Settlement Amount
3 the Class Member can expect to receive once the Class Settlement becomes effective on the Effective
4 Date. Class Members shall be given the opportunity to challenge their Pay Periods information.

5 **5.2. INCENTIVE AWARD FOR PLAINTIFF**

6 Plaintiff may petition the Court to approve an Incentive Award in an amount up to \$5,000.00
7 for Jose Gonzalez Serrano to acknowledge his efforts on behalf of the Settlement Class in this Action,
8 including assisting in the investigation and consulting with Class Counsel and providing crucial
9 documents to Class Counsel. Defendant shall not oppose any request by Plaintiff for an Incentive
10 Award in such an amount. Any Incentive Award approved by the Court shall be paid to Plaintiff from
11 the Gross Settlement Amount and shall be in addition to any distribution to which he may otherwise
12 be entitled as a Class Participant. Any Incentive Award approved by the Court shall not be considered
13 wages, and the Settlement Administrator shall issue to Plaintiff an IRS Form 1099 reflecting such
14 payment. Plaintiff shall be responsible for the payment of all taxes with respect to any Incentive Award
15 approved by the Court and shall hold Defendant harmless from all liability with regard thereto.

16 **5.3. PAYMENT TO CLASS PARTICIPANTS**

17 Each Class Participant shall be eligible to receive payment of the Individual Settlement
18 Amount, which is a share of the Net Settlement Amount based on the pro rata number of pay periods
19 by the Class Members during the Class Period as a proportion of all pay periods by all Class Members.
20 Each Class Participant, including Plaintiff, shall be responsible for the payment of the Employee’s
21 Taxes and Required Withholding with respect to his or her Individual Settlement Amount and shall
22 hold Defendant harmless from any and all liability with regard thereto.

23 **5.4. PAYMENT TO PAGA SETTLEMENT CLASS**

24 Each member of the PAGA Settlement Class shall be entitled to receive a portion of the PAGA
25 Payment. The PAGA Payment shall consist of the penalties pursuant to PAGA that the Parties have
26 agreed is a reasonable sum to be paid in settlement of the PAGA claims included in the Action, which
27 is \$5,000.00. The PAGA Payment must be approved by the Court pursuant to Labor Code section 2699
28 and is to be distributed as follows: seventy-five percent (75%) (i.e., \$3,750.00) to the LWDA and

1 twenty-five percent (25%) (i.e., \$1,250.00) to the PAGA Settlement Class. The portion of the PAGA
2 Payment allocated to the PAGA Settlement Class shall be distributed to the PAGA Settlement Class
3 based on the pro rata number of pay periods worked by each particular PAGA Settlement Class member
4 during the PAGA Period as a proportion of all pay periods worked by all members of the PAGA
5 Settlement Class.

6 **5.5. TAX TREATMENT AND PAYMENT**

7 For the purpose of calculating Employee's Taxes and Required Withholding for the Individual
8 Settlement Amounts for Class Participants (including any payments to the Class Representative but
9 exclusive of his Incentive Award), the Parties agree that 0% of each Individual Settlement Amount
10 shall constitute payment in the form of wages (and each Class Participant will be issued an IRS Form
11 W-2 for such payment to him or her), and 100% of each Individual Settlement Amount shall constitute
12 penalties and interest (and each Class Participant will be issued an IRS Form 1099 for such payment
13 to him or her). The Parties understand that Plaintiff and the Class Participants who receive any payment
14 pursuant to this Settlement Agreement shall be solely responsible for all individual tax obligations.

15 With respect to the PAGA Payment and any payments made to individual members of the
16 PAGA Settlement Class, all such payments shall be treated as payments owing for penalties and interest
17 thereon and shall not be considered wages. The Settlement Administrator shall issue to members of the
18 PAGA Settlement Class an IRS Form 1099 reflecting such payment. Members of the PAGA Settlement
19 Class shall be solely responsible for the payment of all taxes with respect to any PAGA payments made
20 to them.

21 **5.6. NO EFFECT ON EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS**

22 Neither the Class Settlement nor any amounts paid under the Class Settlement will modify any
23 previously credited hours, days, or weeks of service under any employee benefit plan, policy or bonus
24 program sponsored by Defendant. Such amounts will not form the basis for additional contributions to,
25 benefits under, or any other monetary entitlement under Defendant's sponsored benefit plans, policies,
26 or bonus programs. The payments made under the terms of this Settlement Agreement shall not be
27 applied retroactively, currently, or on a going forward basis, as salary, earnings, wages, or any other
28 form of compensation for the purposes of any of Defendant's benefit plan, policy, or bonus program.

1 Defendant retains the right to modify the language of its benefits plans, policies, and bonus programs
2 to reflect this intent and to make clear that any amounts paid pursuant to this Settlement Agreement are
3 not for “pay periods,” “weeks worked,” “weeks paid,” “weeks of service,” or any similar measuring
4 term as defined by applicable plans, policies, and bonus programs for purpose of eligibility, vesting,
5 benefit accrual, or any other purpose, and that additional contributions or benefits are not required by
6 this Settlement Agreement. Defendant does not consider the Class Settlement payments
7 “compensation” for purposes of determining eligibility for, or benefit accrual within, any benefit plans,
8 policies, or bonus programs, or any other plan sponsored by Defendant.

9 **5.7. CLASS ATTORNEY FEES AND EXPENSES**

10 As part of the motion for final approval of the Class Settlement, Class Counsel may apply for
11 an award of Class Attorney Fees and Expenses with the fee portion not to exceed one-third of the Gross
12 Settlement Amount (i.e., \$32,916.67) and the award of costs and expenses up to an additional
13 \$10,000.00. Defendant agrees to not object to any such fee, cost, or expense application in those
14 amounts.

15 As a condition of this Class Settlement, Class Counsel has agreed to pursue fees only in the
16 manner reflected by this subsection. Any Class Attorney Fees and Expenses awarded by the Court shall
17 be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount prior to arriving at the Net Settlement Amount and shall
18 not constitute payment to any Class Members. If Class Counsel voluntarily reduces the request for
19 Class Attorney Fees and Expenses or the Court’s award of Class Attorney Fees and Expenses is less
20 than set forth above, the Net Settlement Amount shall be recalculated to reflect the actual Class
21 Attorney Fees and Expenses awarded.

22 The Class Attorney Fees and Expenses approved by the Court shall reflect: **(a)** all work
23 performed and costs and expenses incurred by, or at the direction of, any attorney purporting to
24 represent the Settlement Class through the date of this Settlement Agreement; **(b)** all work to be
25 performed and costs to be incurred in connection with approval by the Court of the Class Settlement;
26 **(c)** all work to be performed and costs and expenses, if any, incurred in connection with administering
27 the Class Settlement through the Effective Date and dismissal of the Action with prejudice; and **(d)** may
28 be based on the “catalyst theory” and/or the “common fund doctrine.”

1 **6. SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION**

2 **6.1. COSTS AND EXPENSES**

3 All costs and expenses due to the Settlement Administrator in connection with its administration
4 of the Class Settlement, including, but not limited to, providing the Class Notice, locating Class
5 Members, processing Opt Out requests and objections, distributing the portion of the PAGA Payment
6 payable to the LWDA, distributing the portion of the PAGA Payment payable to the members of the
7 PAGA Settlement Class, and calculating, administering and distributing Individual Settlement
8 Amounts to the Class Participants and related tax forms, shall be paid from the Gross Settlement
9 Amount, and is not expected to exceed \$7,000.00.

10 **6.2. PAYMENT BY DEFENDANT**

11 Defendant shall deposit the Gross Settlement Amount in a lump sum payment to the Settlement
12 Administrator within fifteen (15) days of the Effective Date. In no event shall Defendant be obligated
13 to pay or deposit with the Settlement Administrator more than \$98,750.00, except where the Escalator
14 Provision is triggered.

15 **7. NOTICE TO CLASS MEMBERS AND CLAIMS ADMINISTRATION PROCESS**

16 **7.1. THE SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATOR**

17 The Settlement Administrator will be responsible for: mailing the Class Notice and Share Form
18 (**Exhibit 1** and **Exhibit 2**, respectively) to Class Members; posting notice of entry of final order and
19 judgment certifying the Class Settlement and approving this Settlement Agreement; handling inquiries
20 from Class Members concerning the Class Notice; determining Individual Settlement Amounts;
21 determining individual payments to members of the PAGA Settlement Class; maintaining the
22 settlement funds in an appropriate interest-bearing account; preparing, administering, and distributing
23 Individual Settlement Amounts to Class Participants; preparing, administering, and distributing
24 individual payments to members of the PAGA Settlement Class; distributing the portion of the PAGA
25 Payment payable to the LWDA; issuing a final report and performing such other duties as the Parties
26 may direct. Additionally, the Settlement Administrator will handle all tax document preparation and
27 reporting, including state and federal tax forms, if any.

1 On a weekly basis, the Settlement Administrator will provide reports to Class Counsel and
2 Defense Counsel with summary information updating them as to the number of validated and timely
3 objections and Opt Out requests. The Settlement Administrator will serve on Class Counsel and
4 Defense Counsel via e-mail date-stamped copies of the original Opt Out requests and objections no
5 later than seven (7) days after their receipt. The Settlement Administrator will provide Class Counsel
6 with proof of mailing of the Class Notice, without listing individual Class Member names which the
7 Settlement Administrator will file with the Court at the time Class Counsel files its motion in support
8 of the Court's Final Approval and Fairness Hearing.

9 No later than thirty (30) days prior to the Final Approval and Fairness Hearing, the Settlement
10 Administrator will compile and deliver to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel a report with summary
11 information regarding: **(a)** the total amount of final Individual Settlement Amounts of each Class
12 Participant, without any identifying personal information; **(b)** the number of Class Participants to
13 receive such payments, and **(c)** the final number of Opt-Outs and objections.

14 Administrative Expenses are not anticipated to exceed \$7,000.00. Prior to the calculation and
15 distribution of the Individual Settlement Amounts, the Settlement Administrator shall calculate the
16 total Administrative Expenses through the conclusion of their services and such actual amount will be
17 deducted from the Gross Settlement Amount prior to the final calculation of the Individual Settlement
18 Amounts.

19 **7.2. NOTICE TO CLASS MEMBERS**

20 Notice shall be provided to Class Members in the following manner: Within fourteen (14) days
21 after the Preliminary Approval Date, Defendant shall provide the Settlement Administrator with a list
22 of Class Members and members of the PAGA Settlement Class containing names, social security
23 numbers, number of Pay Periods during the Class Period and the PAGA Period (or sufficient
24 information for the Settlement Administrator to calculate the number of Pay Periods), last-known
25 addresses, and phone numbers (the "Database"). The Database shall be marked
26 "Confidential – Settlement Administrator's Eyes Only." Class Counsel shall not receive a copy of this
27 list.
28

1 Within fourteen days (14) days following the receipt of the Database, the Settlement
2 Administrator shall determine the number of Pay Periods worked by each Class Member and PAGA
3 Settlement Class Member, populate the data for each Class Member accordingly, and send each Class
4 Member the Class Notice via first-class, United States mail. The Class Notice shall also contain an
5 easily-understood statement alerting the Class Members that, unless they elect to Opt Out of the Class
6 Settlement, the Class Member is releasing and waiving all Released Claims against the Released
7 Parties.

8 The Class Notice will inform Class Members of their estimated share of the settlement and the
9 number of Pay Periods they worked during the Class Period. Class Members may dispute their Pay
10 Periods if they believe they worked more in the Class Period than Defendant's records show by
11 submitting information to the Settlement Administrator no later than forty-five (45) days after being
12 mailed the Class Notice and Share Form by the Settlement Administrator, which is the defined
13 Response Deadline. The Settlement Administrator will jointly work with Plaintiff and Defendant to
14 resolve the dispute in good faith. If Plaintiff and Defendant cannot agree over the Pay Periods to be
15 credited, the Settlement Administrator shall make the final decision based on the information presented
16 by the Class Member and Defendant.

17 **7.3. OPT OUT PROCEDURE**

18 Class Members who do not timely Opt Out of the Class Settlement will be deemed to participate
19 in the Class Settlement and shall become Class Participants without having to submit a claim form or
20 take any other action. To Opt Out of the Class Settlement, the Class Member must submit a letter or
21 postcard to the Settlement Administrator by the Response Deadline. The Opt Out request must state
22 the Class Member's name, address, telephone number, and signature. The Opt Out request should state
23 something to the effect of:

24 "I WISH TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SETTLEMENT CLASS IN THE *JOSE*
25 *GONZALEZ SERRANO V. HOFFMAN HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY, INC.* LAWSUIT.
26 I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I ASK TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SETTLEMENT
27 CLASS, I WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY MONEY FROM THE CLASS SETTLEMENT
28

1 OF THIS LAWSUIT AND WILL NOT BE RELEASING ANY CLAIMS I MIGHT
2 HAVE.”

3 Any Opt Out request that is not postmarked by the Response Deadline will be invalid. If prior
4 to the Response Deadline any Class Notice mailed to a Class Member is returned as having been
5 undelivered by the United States Postal Service, the Settlement Administrator shall perform a skip trace
6 search and seek an address correction for such Class Members, and a second Class Notice will be sent
7 to any new or different address obtained.

8 It will be presumed that, if an envelope containing the Class Notice has not been returned within
9 thirty (30) days of the mailing, the Class Member received the Class Notice. At least twenty-one (21)
10 days prior to the Final Approval and Fairness Hearing, the Settlement Administrator shall provide Class
11 Counsel and Defense Counsel with a Declaration of Due Diligence and Proof of Mailing with regard
12 to the mailing of the Class Notice and its attempts to locate Class Members. The declaration shall
13 specify the number of Class Members to whom the Class Notice was sent and the number of Class
14 Members to whom the Class Notice was not delivered, as well as information relating to the number
15 of Opt-Outs and objectors. Class Counsel shall file this declaration with the Court.

16 If the Settlement Administrator determines that an Opt Out request returned by a Class Member
17 before the Response Deadline is deficient, then the Settlement Administrator shall mail a deficiency
18 letter to that Class Member identifying the problem. If a Class Member submits both a dispute and an
19 Opt Out request, the Settlement Administrator shall make reasonable attempts to clarify as if the Opt
20 Out request were deficient. If the Class Member fails to cure the deficiency, the Opt Out request shall
21 be disregarded and the claim will be paid, and the Class Member will become bound by the judgment.

22 Class Participants will be bound by the Release of Released Claims set forth in the definition
23 of “Released Claims” provided in this Settlement Agreement.

24 A request to Opt Out of the Class Settlement shall **not** serve to exclude the Class Member from
25 participation in the PAGA Settlement Class. Opt-Outs shall still be entitled to their share of the PAGA
26 Payment. Class Members who are also members of the PAGA Settlement Class shall have no right or
27 ability to opt out of the portion of this Settlement Agreement releasing PAGA claims.
28

1 **7.4. OBJECTION PROCEDURE**

2 The Class Notice shall inform the Class Members of their right to object to the Class Settlement
3 if they do not Opt Out. Any Class Participants who wish to object to the Class Settlement may submit
4 a written objection to the Settlement Administrator no later than the Response Deadline. Only Class
5 Participants may object to the Settlement. The objection should include the case name and number and
6 must set forth, in clear and concise terms, a statement of the reasons why the objector believes that the
7 Court should find that the proposed Class Settlement is not in the best interest of the Settlement Class
8 and the reasons why the Class Settlement should not be approved, including the legal and factual
9 arguments supporting the objection. If an objector also wishes to appear at the Final Approval and
10 Fairness Hearing, in person or through an attorney, they may do so. The Settlement Administrator will
11 promptly serve copies of any objection or notice of intention to appear on Class Counsel and Defense
12 Counsel. Class Members wishing to make an objection may appear at the Final Approval and Fairness
13 Hearing, either in person or through a lawyer retained at their own expense.

14 **7.5. NOTICE OF FINAL JUDGMENT**

15 Within seven (7) days after the Court has held a Final and Fairness Approval Hearing and
16 entered a final order certifying the Class for settlement purposes only and approving the Class
17 Settlement, the Settlement Administrator will give notice of judgment to Class Members pursuant to
18 rule 3.771(b) of the California Rules of Court, by posting a copy of said order and final judgment on
19 its website at a web address to be included in the Class Notice.

20 **8. CLASS SETTLEMENT FUNDING AND DISTRIBUTION**

21 **8.1. ALLOCATION OF THE GROSS SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

22 The claims of all Class Members are settled for the Gross Settlement Amount of \$98,750.00,
23 which will be allocated as follows:

- 24 1. The Administrative Expenses, estimated not to exceed \$7,000.00;
25 2. Class Counsel's attorney fees not to exceed \$32,916.67;
26 3. Class Counsel's litigation costs and expenses not to exceed \$10,000.00;
27 4. The Incentive Award, not to exceed \$5,000.00;
28 5. PAGA Payment to PAGA Settlement Class members of \$1,250; and

1 6. PAGA Payment to LWDA of \$3,750.00.

2 For purposes of calculating the estimated Individual Settlement Amounts, the Settlement
3 Administrator shall calculate the estimated Net Settlement Amount based on the estimated values
4 provided above prior to sending Notice to the Class Members. Prior to final distribution, the Settlement
5 Administrator shall recalculate the final Net Settlement Amount based on the actual values of the
6 amounts in each category.

7 **8.2. CALCULATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT AMOUNTS FOR**
8 **CLASS PARTICIPANTS**

9 Individual Settlement Amounts to be paid to Class Participants shall be paid from the Net
10 Settlement Amount. The portion of the Net Settlement Amount shall be distributed pro rata on a
11 “checks cashed” basis based on the proportional number of weeks worked by each Class Member
12 during the Class Period.

13 Defendant will provide the Settlement Administrator with any information reasonably
14 necessary to perform the calculation of number of pay periods for each Class Member, and any other
15 reasonably required information the Settlement Administrator requests to perform the calculations
16 required under this Settlement Agreement. Defendant shall have no responsibility for deciding the
17 validity of the Individual Settlement Amounts or any other payments made pursuant to this Settlement
18 Agreement, shall have no involvement in or responsibility for the determination or payment of
19 Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholding, and shall have no liability for any errors made with
20 respect to such Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholding. Plaintiff and Class Participants represent
21 and understand that they shall be solely responsible for any and all tax obligation associated with their
22 respective Individual Settlement Amounts and Incentive Awards.

23 **8.3. CALCULATION OF THE PAYMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF**
24 **THE PAGA SETTLEMENT CLASS**

25 Each member of the PAGA Settlement Class shall be entitled to receive a portion of the PAGA
26 Payment. The PAGA Payment shall consist of the penalties pursuant to PAGA that the Parties have
27 agreed is a reasonable sum to be paid in settlement of the PAGA claims included in the Action, which
28 is \$5,000.00. The PAGA Payment is to be approved by the Court pursuant to Labor Code section 2699

1 and is to be distributed as follows: seventy-five percent (75%) (i.e., \$3,750.00) to the LWDA and
2 twenty-five percent (25%) (i.e., \$1,250.00) to the PAGA Settlement Class.

3 The portion of the PAGA Payment allocated to the PAGA Settlement Class shall be distributed
4 to the PAGA Settlement Class based on the pro rata number of pay periods worked by each particular
5 PAGA Settlement Class member during the PAGA Period as a proportion of all pay periods worked
6 by all PAGA Settlement Class members during the PAGA Period. Each member of the PAGA
7 Settlement Class, including Plaintiff, shall be responsible for the payment of the Employee's Taxes and
8 Required Withholding with respect to their share of the PAGA Payment and shall hold Defendant
9 harmless from any and all liability with regard thereto.

10 Defendant will provide the Settlement Administrator with any information reasonably
11 necessary to perform the calculation of number of pay periods worked for each PAGA Settlement Class
12 member, and any other reasonably required information the Settlement Administrator requests to
13 perform the calculations required under this Settlement Agreement. Defendant shall have no
14 responsibility for deciding the validity of the individual payment amounts allocated to each member of
15 the PAGA Settlement Class or any other payments made pursuant to this Settlement Agreement, shall
16 have no involvement in or responsibility for the determination or payment of Employee's Taxes and
17 Required Withholding, and shall have no liability for any errors made with respect to such Employee's
18 Taxes and Required Withholding.

19 The members of the PAGA Settlement Class shall be solely responsible for any and all tax
20 obligation associated with their respective shares of the PAGA Payment.

21 **8.4. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF ATTORNEY FEES AND EXPENSES**

22 The Settlement Administrator shall distribute to Class Counsel any attorney fees and expenses
23 approved by the Court no later than fourteen (14) days after the Effective Date.

24 **8.5. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF INCENTIVE AWARD**

25 The Settlement Administrator shall distribute to Plaintiff the Incentive Award approved by the
26 Court no later than fourteen (14) days after the Effective Date.

1 **8.6. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF PAGA PAYMENT TO THE LWDA**

2 The Settlement Administrator shall distribute to the LWDA the portion of the PAGA Payment
3 due to it and approved by the Court no later than fourteen (14) days after the Effective Date.

4 **8.7. INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT AMOUNTS**

5 Within two hundred ten (210) days of mailing the Individual Settlement Amounts to Class
6 Participants, the Settlement Administrator shall file with the Court and provide to Class Counsel a
7 declaration of payment. If any Class Participant is deceased, payment shall be made payable to the
8 estate of that Class Member and delivered to the executor or administrator of that estate, unless the
9 Settlement Administrator has received an affidavit or declaration pursuant to California Probate Code
10 section 13101, in which case payment shall be made to the affiant(s) or declarant(s).

11 **8.8. NON-CASHED SETTLEMENT CHECKS**

12 Any funds associated with checks that have not been cashed within one hundred eighty (180)
13 days, will become void and the Individual Settlement Amount associated with the uncashed check will
14 be remitted pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 384 to Greater Bakersfield Legal Aid, or other
15 non-profit organization agreed upon by the Parties and approved by the Court) as *cy pres*. The Parties
16 agree that this disposition results in no “unpaid residue” within the meaning of California Civil
17 Procedure Code section 384, as the entire Net Settlement Amount will be paid out to Class Participants,
18 whether or not they all cash their Individual Settlement Amount checks. Therefore, Defendant shall not
19 be required to pay any interest on said amount. For the purposes of determining whether Defendant has
20 met their financial obligation to pay the Individual Settlement Payment, Defendant will be deemed to
21 have fulfilled its obligation upon the mailing of the check to the Class Member, regardless of whether
22 such Class Member subsequently negotiates the check.

23 **8.9. DISPUTES REGARDING CLASS MEMBER PAY PERIODS DATA OR**
24 **PAYMENT OF INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT SHARES**

25 Class Member Pay Periods and the corresponding Individual Settlement Amount shall be
26 calculated using the employment and payroll records of Defendant, which presumptively shall be
27 deemed to be full, complete, and accurate for purposes of this Settlement Agreement. To overcome
28 that presumption, any Class Member objecting to the accuracy of the number of Pay Periods or amount

1 of the Individual Settlement Amount must submit documentary evidence, such as pay stubs or other
2 written employment records, to the Settlement Administrator. Each Class Member may dispute the
3 number of Pay Periods or their estimated Individual Settlement Amount contained on their Class Notice
4 (“Pay Periods Dispute”). Any such Pay Periods Dispute must be mailed or faxed to the Settlement
5 Administrator by the Class Member, postmarked or fax-stamped on or before the Response Deadline.
6 The Settlement Administrator shall immediately provide copies of all disputes to counsel for
7 Defendant, shall inform Class Counsel of the dispute without disclosing the identity of the Class
8 Member making the dispute, and shall immediately attempt to resolve all such disputes directly with
9 relevant Class Members with the assistance of Defendant, Defense Counsel, and Class Counsel. If the
10 dispute cannot be resolved, it shall be submitted to the Settlement Administrator for its final, non-
11 appealable decision. The Settlement Administrator shall use its best efforts to resolve all such disputes
12 prior to the Effective Date. If, however, a dispute arises or is not resolved until after the Settlement
13 Amount has been distributed, the initial calculation shall stand (as Defendant shall be under no
14 obligation to pay any amounts in excess of the Gross Settlement Amount under this Settlement
15 Agreement).

16 **9. NULLIFICATION OF THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

17 **9.1. NON-APPROVAL OF THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

18 The Class Settlement and conditional class certification shall be considered null and void, and
19 neither the Class Settlement, conditional class certification, nor any of the related negotiations or
20 proceedings, shall be of any force or effect, and all Parties to the Class Settlement shall stand in the
21 same position, without prejudice, as if the Class Settlement had been neither entered into nor filed with
22 the Court, if any of the following occur: **(a)** the Court should for any reason fail to approve this
23 Settlement Agreement in the form agreed to by the Parties; **(b)** the Court should for any reason fail to
24 enter a judgment with prejudice of the Action, or **(c)** the approval of the Class Settlement and judgment
25 is reversed, modified, or declared or rendered void. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Parties may
26 attempt in good faith to cure any perceived defects in this Settlement Agreement to facilitate approval.
27
28

1 **9.2. PARTIES' RIGHTS TO VOID CLASS SETTLEMENT; ESCALATOR**
2 **PROVISION**

3 If five percent (5%) or more members of the Settlement Class timely submit Opt Out requests,
4 Defendant shall have the right (but not the obligation) to void this Settlement Agreement. If the number
5 of Pay Periods is greater than ten percent (10%) above that represented by Defendant, as described
6 above, then the portion of the Gross Settlement Amount attributable to non-PAGA claims (i.e., the
7 Gross Settlement Amount less the PAGA Payment) shall be increased proportionally for each
8 additional Pay Period above the 10% buffer. If this provision is triggered so as to increase the Gross
9 Settlement Amount, the Parties agree that the portion of the Gross Settlement Amount allocated to
10 attorneys' fees will increase proportionally such that the total amount of attorneys' fees remains one-
11 third of the Gross Settlement Amount after the upward adjustment required by this provision is
12 implemented. Alternatively, in the event that this escalator provision is triggered, then Defendant has
13 the option to adjust the binning or end dates of the Release Period so as to have a later stat date or an
14 earlier end date at the Defendant's discretion in order to limit the amount of covered pay periods to one
15 hundred ten percent (110%) of the number of pay periods represented by Defendant.

16 **9.3. INVALIDATION**

17 Invalidation of any material portion of this Settlement Agreement shall invalidate the Class
18 Settlement in its entirety, unless the Parties subsequently agree in writing that the remaining provisions
19 of the Class Settlement are to remain in full force and effect.

20 **9.4. STAY ON APPEAL**

21 If a timely appeal from the approval of the Class Settlement and judgment, the judgment shall
22 be stayed, and Defendant shall not be obligated to fund the Gross Settlement Amount or take any other
23 actions required by this Settlement Agreement until all appeal rights have been exhausted by operation
24 of law.

25 **10. MOTIONS FOR COURT APPROVAL**

26 **10.1. PRELIMINARY APPROVAL**

27 As soon as practicable after execution of this Settlement Agreement, Class Counsel will submit
28 this Settlement Agreement to the Court along with a Motion for Preliminary Approval of the Class

1 Settlement. Each party shall cooperate to present the Class Settlement to the Court for preliminary
2 approval in a timely fashion.

3 **10.2. FINAL APPROVAL**

4 The Final Approval and Fairness Hearing shall be held before the Court. At the Final Approval
5 and Fairness Hearing, Plaintiff shall move the Court for the entry of the final order certifying the
6 Settlement Class for settlement purposes only and approving the Class Settlement as being fair,
7 reasonable, and adequate to the Class Participants within the meaning of California Rules of Court,
8 Rule 3.769, subdivisions (c), (d) and (e), and for the entry of a final judgment of the Action consistent
9 with the terms of the Class Settlement and rule 3.769, subdivision (h), of the California Rules of Court.
10 Class Counsel and Defense Counsel shall submit to the Court such pleadings and/or evidence as may
11 be required for the Court's determination.

12 **11. RELEASES AND WAIVERS**

13 **11.1. RELEASE OF CLAIMS BY THE SETTLEMENT CLASS**

14 Upon the Effective Date, the Releasing Parties shall be deemed to each release the Released
15 Parties, and each of them, of and from any and all Released Claims arising during the Class Period. It
16 is the desire of the Parties and the Releasing Parties to fully, finally, and forever settle, compromise,
17 and discharge the Released Claims. Each of the Releasing Parties, including each Class Participant,
18 will be bound by the release of Released Claims as a result of the Class Settlement and to the terms of
19 the final judgment and the satisfaction of such judgment.

20 Class Participants will be deemed to have acknowledged and agreed that their claims for wages
21 and/or penalties in the Action are disputed, and that their Individual Settlement Amount constitutes
22 payment of all sums allegedly due to them. Class Participants will be deemed to have acknowledged
23 and agreed that California Labor Code section 206.5 is not applicable to the Individual Settlement
24 Amount. That section provides in pertinent part as follows:

1 “An employer shall not require the execution of a release of a claim or right on account
2 of wages due, or to become due, or made as an advance on wages to be earned, unless
3 payment of those wages has been made.”

4 **11.2. RELEASE OF CLAIMS BY PLAINTIFF**

5 Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and his dependents, heirs and assigns, beneficiaries, devisees,
6 legatees, executors, administrators, agents, trustees, conservators, guardians, personal representatives,
7 and successors-in-interest, whether individual, class, representative, legal, equitable, direct or indirect,
8 or any other type or in any other capacity, shall and does hereby forever release, discharge and agree
9 to hold harmless the Released Parties from any and all charges, complaints, claims, liabilities,
10 obligations, promises, agreements, controversies, damages, actions, causes of action, suits, rights,
11 demands, costs, losses, debts and expenses (including attorney fees and costs), known or unknown, at
12 law or in equity, which he may now have or may have after the signing of this Settlement Agreement,
13 arising out of or in any way connected with his employment with Defendant including, the Released
14 Claims, claims that were asserted or could have been asserted in the Complaint, and any and all
15 transactions, occurrences, or matters between the Parties occurring prior to the date this Settlement
16 Agreement is fully executed. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, this release shall include,
17 but not be limited to, any and all claims under: **(a)** the Americans with Disabilities Act; **(b)** Title VII
18 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; **(c)** the Civil Rights Act of 1991; **(d)** 42 U.S.C. § 1981; **(e)** the Age
19 Discrimination in Employment Act; **(f)** the Fair Labor Standards Act; **(g)** the Equal Pay Act; **(h)** the
20 Employee Retirement Income Security Act, as amended; **(i)** the Consolidated Omnibus Budget
21 Reconciliation Act; **(j)** the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; **(k)** the Family and Medical Leave Act; **(l)** the
22 Civil Rights Act of 1966; **(m)** the California Fair Employment and Housing Act; **(n)** the California
23 Constitution; **(o)** the California Labor Code; **(p)** the California Government Code; **(q)** the California
24 Civil Code; and **(r)** any and all other federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, regulations, rules,
25 and other laws, and any and all claims based on constitutional, statutory, common law, or regulatory
26 grounds as well as any other claims based on theories of wrongful or constructive discharge, breach of
27 contract or implied contract, fraud, misrepresentation, promissory estoppel, or intentional infliction of
28

1 emotional distress, negligent infliction of emotional distress, or damages under any other federal, state,
2 or local statutes, ordinances, regulations, rules, or laws. This release is for any and all relief, no matter
3 how denominated, including, but not limited to, back pay, front pay, vacation pay, bonuses,
4 compensatory damages, tortious damages, liquidated damages, punitive damages, damages for pain
5 and suffering, and attorney fees and costs, and Plaintiff hereby forever releases, discharges and agrees
6 to hold harmless Defendant and the Released Parties from any and all claims for attorney fees and costs
7 arising out of the matters released in this Settlement Agreement.

8 Plaintiff specifically acknowledges that he is aware of and familiar with the provisions of
9 California Civil Code section 1542, which provides as follows:

10 “A general release does not extend to claims that the creditor or releasing party does not
11 know or suspect to exist in his or her favor at the time of executing the release and that,
12 if known by him or her, would have materially affected his or her settlement with the
13 debtor or released party.”
14

15 Plaintiff, being aware of California Civil Code section 1542, hereby expressly waives and
16 relinquishes all rights and benefits he may have under section 1542 as well as any other statutes or
17 common law principles of a similar effect. Plaintiff may hereafter discover facts in addition to or
18 different from those which he now knows or believes to be true with respect to the subject matter of all
19 the claims referenced herein, but agrees that, upon the Effective Date, Plaintiff shall and hereby does
20 fully, finally, and forever settle and release any and all claims against the Released Parties, known or
21 unknown, suspected or unsuspected, contingent or non-contingent, that were asserted or could have
22 been asserted upon any theory of law or equity without regard to the subsequent discovery of existence
23 of such different or additional facts.

24 Plaintiff's Acknowledgement _____

25 **11.3. CIRCULAR 230 DISCLAIMER**

26 Each party to this Settlement Agreement (for purposes of this section, the “Acknowledging
27 Party”; and each party to this Agreement other than the Acknowledging Party, an “Other Party”)
28 acknowledges and agrees that (1) no provision of this Settlement Agreement, and no written

1 communication or disclosure between or among the parties or their attorneys and other advisers, is or
2 was intended to be, nor shall any such communication or disclosure constitute or be construed or be
3 relied upon as, tax advice within the meaning of United States Treasury Department Circular 230 (31
4 C.F.R. Part 10); **(2)** the Acknowledging Party **(a)** has relied exclusively upon her or its own
5 independent legal and tax advisers for advice (including tax advice) in connection with this Settlement
6 Agreement, **(b)** has not entered into this Settlement Agreement based upon the recommendation of any
7 other party or any attorney or advisor to any other party, and **(c)** is not entitled to rely upon any
8 communication or disclosure by any attorney or adviser to any other party to avoid any tax penalty that
9 may be imposed on the Acknowledging Party; and **(3)** no attorney or adviser to any other party has
10 imposed any limitation that protects the confidentiality of any such attorney's or adviser's tax strategies
11 (regardless of whether such limitation is legally binding) upon disclosure by the Acknowledging Party
12 of the tax treatment or tax structure of any transaction, including any transaction contemplated by this
13 Settlement Agreement.

14 **12. DUTIES OF THE PARTIES**

15 **12.1. MUTUAL FULL COOPERATION**

16 The Parties agree to cooperate fully with one another to accomplish and implement the terms
17 of this Settlement Agreement. Such cooperation shall include, but not be limited to, execution of such
18 other documents and the taking of such other actions as may reasonably be necessary to fulfill the terms
19 of this Settlement Agreement. The Parties shall use their best efforts, including all efforts contemplated
20 by this Settlement Agreement and any other efforts that may become necessary by court order or
21 otherwise, to effectuate this Settlement Agreement and the terms set forth herein. As soon as practicable
22 after execution of this Settlement Agreement, Class Counsel, with the cooperation of Defendant and
23 Defense Counsel, shall take all necessary and reasonable steps to secure the Court's final approval of
24 this Settlement Agreement.

25 **12.2. DUTY TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CLASS SETTLEMENT**

26 The Parties agree to abide by all of the terms of this Settlement Agreement in good faith and to
27 support the Class Settlement fully and to use their best efforts to defend this Class Settlement from any
28 legal challenge, whether by appeal or collateral attack.

1 **12.3. DUTIES PRIOR TO COURT APPROVAL**

2 Class Counsel shall promptly submit this Settlement Agreement to the Court for preliminary
3 approval and determination by the Court as to its fairness, adequacy, and reasonableness. Promptly
4 upon execution of this Settlement Agreement, Class Counsel shall apply to the Court for the entry of a
5 preliminary order scheduling a hearing on the question of whether the proposed Class Settlement
6 should be approved as fair, reasonable, and adequate as to the Class Members, approving as to form
7 and content the proposed Class Notice and Share Form attached hereto as **Exhibit 1** and **Exhibit 2**,
8 respectively, and directing the mailing of the Class Notice to Class Members. While Defendant can
9 reserve its right to object to facts or assertions made in the moving papers, Defense Counsel shall file
10 a notice of non-opposition to the granting of the motion for preliminary approval or join in the motion.

11 **13. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

12 **13.1. VOIDING THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

13 Pending Court approval and other than as provided herein, if any of the conditions set forth in
14 this Settlement Agreement are not met and satisfied, this Settlement Agreement may, at the option of
15 either Plaintiff or Defendant, be ineffective, void, and of no further force and effect, and may not be
16 used or be admissible in any subsequent proceeding, either in this Court or in any other court or forum.
17 If either Party decides to void the Settlement Agreement, then the Settlement Agreement and
18 conditional class certification shall be considered void, and neither the Settlement Agreement,
19 conditional class certification, nor any of the related negotiations or proceedings, shall be of any force
20 or effect, and the Parties shall stand in the same position, without prejudice, as if this Settlement
21 Agreement had been neither entered into nor filed with the Court. Should any Party choose to void the
22 Class Settlement under this subsection, such Party shall be responsible for all Settlement Administrator
23 fees and costs actually incurred.

24 **13.2. DIFFERENT FACTS**

25 The Parties acknowledge that, except for matters expressly represented herein, the facts in
26 relation to the dispute and all claims released by the terms of this Settlement Agreement may turn out
27 to be different from the facts now known by each party and/or its counsel, or believed by such Party or
28 counsel to be true, and each Party therefore expressly assumes the risk of the existence of different or

1 presently unknown facts, and agrees that this Settlement Agreement shall be in all respects effective
2 and binding despite such difference.

3 **13.3. NO PRIOR ASSIGNMENTS**

4 The Parties represent, covenant, and warrant that they have not directly or indirectly assigned,
5 transferred, encumbered, or purported to assign, transfer, or encumber to any person or entity any
6 portion of any liability, claim, demand, action, cause of action, or right herein released and discharged
7 except as set forth herein.

8 **13.4. NON-ADMISSION**

9 Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as or deemed to be an admission by
10 any Party of any liability, culpability, negligence, or wrongdoing toward any other Party, or any other
11 person, and the Parties specifically disclaim any liability, culpability, negligence, or wrongdoing
12 toward each other or any other person. Each of the Parties has entered into this Settlement Agreement
13 with the intention to avoid further disputes and litigation with the attendant inconvenience, expenses,
14 and contingencies. Nothing herein shall constitute any admission by Defendant of wrongdoing or
15 liability, or of the truth of any factual allegations in the Action. Nothing herein shall constitute any
16 admission by Defendant regarding the merits of the Claims in this Action, including but not limited to
17 claims for unpaid wages or violations under California or federal law. Nothing herein shall constitute
18 an admission by Defendant that the Action was properly brought as a class or representative action
19 other than for settlement purposes. To the contrary, Defendant has denied and continues to deny each
20 and every material factual allegation and all Claims. To this end, the Class Settlement of the Action,
21 the negotiation and execution of this Settlement Agreement, and all acts performed or documents
22 executed pursuant to or in furtherance of this Settlement Agreement or the Class Settlement are not,
23 shall not be deemed to be, and may not be used as, an admission or evidence of any wrongdoing or
24 liability on the part of Defendant or of the truth of any of the factual allegations in the Complaint in the
25 Action; and are not, shall not be deemed to be, and may not be used as, an admission or evidence of
26 any fault or omission on the part of Defendant in any civil, criminal, or administrative proceeding in
27 any court, administrative agency, or other tribunal.
28

1 **13.5. NON-EVIDENTIARY USE**

2 Neither this Agreement nor any of its terms, nor any statements or conduct in the negotiation
3 or drafting of it, shall be offered or used as evidence by Plaintiff, any Class Member (including any
4 individual who requested to be excluded from the Settlement Class), Defendant, or its, her, his, or their
5 respective counsel, in the Action, except as is reasonably necessary to effectuate the Settlement
6 Agreement's purpose and terms. This Settlement Agreement may, however, be used by Defendant and
7 the Released Parties to prove or defend against any claim released herein by any Class Member in any
8 judicial, quasi-judicial, administrative, or governmental proceeding.

9 **13.6. MEDIA OR PRESS**

10 Plaintiff and Defendant, and their respective counsel, recognize, accept, and agree that the
11 Parties to this Settlement Agreement desire that the terms of this Settlement Agreement, the fact of the
12 Class Settlement embodied in this Settlement Agreement, the disposition of the Action, the Action, and
13 all matters relating to the litigation of the Action, including discovery proceedings therein, and evidence
14 obtained during the course of the Action, shall not be discussed with or presented to the media or press.

15 **13.7. NON-RETALIATION**

16 Defendant understands and acknowledges that it has a legal obligation to not retaliate against
17 any Class Member who elects to participate in the Class Settlement or elects to Opt Out of the Class
18 Settlement. Defendant will refer any inquiries regarding this Class Settlement to the Settlement
19 Administrator or Class Counsel and will not discourage Class Members who are employees, directly
20 or indirectly, from making claims, opting out, or objecting to the Class Settlement. None of the Parties,
21 or their respective attorneys or agents, shall solicit or encourage any Class Members, directly or
22 indirectly, to Opt Out of the Class Settlement.

23 **13.8. CONSTRUCTION**

24 The Parties agree that the terms and conditions of this Settlement Agreement are the result of
25 lengthy, intensive, arms-length, non-collusive negotiations between the Parties and that this Settlement
26 Agreement is not to be construed in favor of or against any party by reason of the extent to which any
27 party or its counsel participated in the drafting of this Settlement Agreement. If any of the dates in this
28

1 Settlement Agreement fall on a weekend, bank or court holiday, the time to act shall be extended to the
2 next business day.

3 **13.9. GOVERNING LAW**

4 This Settlement Agreement is intended to and shall be governed by the laws of the State of
5 California, without regard to conflict of law principles, in all respects, including execution,
6 interpretation, performance, and enforcement.

7 **13.10. NOTICES**

8 Except for Class Member notices required to be made by the Settlement Administrator, all
9 notices or other communications required or permitted under this Settlement Agreement shall be in
10 writing and shall be sufficiently given if delivered in person to the party or their counsel by U.S.
11 certified mail, postage prepaid, e-mail, facsimile, or overnight delivery addressed to the address of the
12 party appearing in this Settlement Agreement.

13 **13.11. CAPTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

14 Section titles or captions contained herein are inserted as a matter of convenience and for
15 reference only and in no way define, limit, extend, or describe the scope of this Settlement Agreement
16 or any provision thereof.

17 **13.12. MODIFICATION**

18 This Settlement Agreement may not be changed, altered, or modified, except in writing signed
19 by the Parties or the Parties' counsel on their behalf. If preliminary or final approval of this Settlement
20 Agreement has been granted by the Court, then any such amendments or modifications to this
21 Settlement Agreement shall be approved by the Court. This Settlement Agreement may not be
22 discharged except by performance in accordance with its terms or by a writing signed by the Parties.

23 **13.13. INTEGRATION CLAUSE**

24 This Settlement Agreement contains the entire agreement between the Parties relating to the
25 Class Settlement of the Action and the transactions contemplated thereby, and all prior or
26 contemporaneous agreements, understandings, representations, and statements, whether oral or written,
27 and whether by a party or such party's legal counsel, are hereby superseded. No rights under this
28 Settlement Agreement may be waived except in writing as provided above.

1 **13.14. SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS**

2 This Settlement Agreement shall be binding on and inure to the benefit of the Parties and Class
3 Members (excluding only persons who timely Opt Out) and their respective present and former heirs,
4 trustees, executors, administrators, representatives, officers, directors, shareholders, agents, employees,
5 insurers, attorneys, accountants, auditors, advisors, consultants, pension plans, welfare benefit plans,
6 fiduciaries, parent companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, related companies, joint ventures, predecessors,
7 successors, and assigns.

8 **13.15. CORPORATE SIGNATORIES**

9 Any person executing this Settlement Agreement or any such related document on behalf of a
10 corporate signatory or on behalf of a partnership hereby warrants and promises, for the benefit of all
11 Parties hereto, that such person has been duly authorized by such corporation or partnership to execute
12 this Settlement Agreement or any such related document.

13 **13.16. EXECUTION IN COUNTERPARTS**

14 This Settlement Agreement shall become effective upon its execution by all of the undersigned.
15 The Parties may execute this Settlement Agreement in counterparts, and execution of counterparts shall
16 have the same force and effect as if all Settling Parties had signed the same instrument.

17 **13.17. ATTORNEY FEES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES**

18 Except as otherwise specifically provided for herein, each party shall bear her or its own
19 attorney fees, costs, and expenses, taxable or otherwise, incurred by them in or arising out of the Action
20 and shall not seek reimbursement thereof from any other party to this Settlement Agreement.

21 **13.18. ACTION TO ENFORCE AGREEMENT**

22 In any suit or court action to enforce the terms of this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be
23 entitled to recover her or its attorney fees and costs.

24 **14. EXECUTION**

25 The Parties and their counsel have executed this Settlement Agreement on the date below their
26 signatures or the signature of their representatives. The date of this Settlement Agreement shall be the
27 date of the latest signature.
28

APPROVAL AND EXECUTION BY PARTIES

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE:

Dated: 5/30/2023 _____

DocuSigned by:

4BAFE6B88CD345E...
Jose Gonzalez Serrano
Plaintiff and Class Representative

DEFENDANT:

Dated: _____

HOFFMANN HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY,
INC.

By: _____

Title: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM BY COUNSEL

CLASS COUNSEL:

Dated: May 30, 2023

Melmed Law Group P.C.



Megan E. Ross
Attorneys for Plaintiff

APPROVAL AND EXECUTION BY PARTIES

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE:

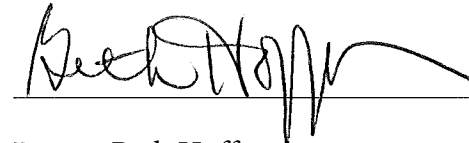
Dated: _____

Jose Gonzalez Serrano
Plaintiff and Class Representative

DEFENDANT:

Dated: May 2, 2023

HOFFMANN HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY,
INC.



By: Beth Hoffmann

Title: Administrator

APPROVED AS TO FORM BY COUNSEL

CLASS COUNSEL:

Dated: _____

Melmed Law Group P.C.

Megan E. Ross
Attorneys for Plaintiff

1 **DEFENDANT’S COUNSEL:**

2
3 Dated: May 3, 2023

KLEIN, DeNATALE, GOLDNER
COOPER, ROSENLIB & KIMBALL, LLP

5
6 By:


VANESSA FRANCO CHAVEZ

7 Attorneys for Defendant, HOFFMAN
8 HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY, INC.
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EXHIBIT 1

Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement

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**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF KERN**

JOSE SERRANO, an individual, on behalf of
himself, the State of California, as a private
attorney general, and on behalf of all others
similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

HOFFMAN HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY,
INC., a California Non-profit; HOFFMAN
HOSPICE HOME FOUNDATION, a California
Non-profit; and DOES 1 TO 50,

Defendants.

Case No.: BCV-22-101016

Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement

A court authorized this notice. This is not a solicitation from a lawyer.

1 **NOTICE OF PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT**

2 *You may be eligible to receive a settlement payment. Please read this notice carefully.*

3 A proposed class action settlement agreement (the “Settlement”) has been reached between:
4 **(1)** Plaintiff Jose Serrano (“Plaintiff”), individually and in his representative capacity on behalf of a
5 group of prospective class members defined below, and as a private attorney general on behalf of the
6 State of California; and **(2)** Defendants Hoffmann Hospice of the Valley, Inc. (“Defendant”).
7 The Settlement resolves disputed claims against Defendant arising out of its compensation practices
8 during the period from April 27, 2018, through March 13, 2022 (the “Class Period”) as applied
9 to all individuals who are or were employed by Defendant in California during the Class Period
10 (“Class Members”).

11 The Court has granted preliminary approval of the Settlement and ordered this notice to be sent
12 to you because you may be entitled to money under the Settlement and because the Settlement affects
13 your legal rights.

14 **NO ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN TO RECEIVE MONEY UNDER THE**
15 **SETTLEMENT:** If you are a Class Member (as defined above) and received this notice, you are
16 automatically included in the Settlement and do not need to take any further action to receive a
17 payment. Unless you request to be excluded from the Settlement, you will release the claims described
18 below.

19 **1. DESCRIPTION OF THE LAWSUIT**

20 Plaintiff, individually and in his representative capacity on behalf of the Class Members, and
21 as a private attorney general on behalf of the State of California, is pursuing a lawsuit against Defendant
22 in the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Kern in the matter of ***Jose Serrano v.***
23 ***Hoffman Hospice of the Valley, Inc.***, case number **BCV-22-101016** (the “Action”). The Action sought
24 recovery for Defendants’ alleged: **(1)** failure to reimburse business expenses; and **(2)** deceptive,
25 fraudulent, or otherwise unlawful business practices based on the foregoing in violation of California’s
26 Unfair Competition Law.

27 **Defendant denies all liability, denies all allegations in the Action, and has raised various**
28 **defenses to the claims.** Defendant asserts that they fully complied with all applicable wage and hour

1 laws, and contend that civil penalties under PAGA are not warranted. Defendant also denies that the
2 Action is suitable for class certification. Defendant has entered into the Settlement solely for purposes
3 of resolving this dispute to avoid costly, disruptive, and time-consuming litigation and does not admit
4 to any wrongdoing or liability.

5 **The Court has not ruled on the merits in the Action.** By approving the Settlement and issuing
6 this notice, the Court is *not* suggesting which side would win or lose the case if it went to trial or
7 whether the claims are suitable for class certification. To avoid the additional expense, inconvenience,
8 and risk of continued litigation, however, Plaintiff and Defendant (the “Parties”) have concluded that
9 it is in their respective best interests and the interests of the Class Members to settle the Action on the
10 terms summarized in this notice. The Settlement was reached after Defendants provided extensive
11 information and documents to Plaintiff’s counsel, and after lengthy arms-length non-collusive
12 negotiations between the Parties, including mediation with an experienced and well-respected mediator
13 in California. In these negotiations, both sides recognized the substantial risk of the Court deciding
14 against them at trial and determined that the Settlement was a fair, reasonable, and adequate way to
15 resolve the disputed claims.

16 Plaintiff and Plaintiff’s counsel—Megan Ross and Hannah Becker of Melmed Law Group P.C.
17 (“Class Counsel”)—support the Settlement. Among the reasons for support are the defenses to liability
18 potentially available to Defendant, the risk of denial of class certification, the inherent risk of trial on
19 the merits, and the delays and uncertainties associated with litigation. Plaintiff and Class Counsel
20 believe that the settlement described in this notice is fair, adequate, reasonable, and in the best interests
21 of Plaintiff and the Class Members.

22 Under the Settlement, the following settlement class will be certified under California law: *all*
23 *individuals who are or were employed by Defendant in California during the Class Period.* The “Class
24 Period” is defined as the period from April 27, 2018, through March 13, 2022. The Settlement provides
25 for a gross settlement amount of \$98,750.00, a share of which is to be distributed to the Class Members
26 based on the pro rata number of weeks worked by the Class Members during the Class Period as a
27 proportion of all weeks worked by all Class Members. In exchange for their share of the settlement
28

1 amount, all participating Class Members will be deemed to have released Defendants from liability on
2 the terms described in this notice.

3 On [date of preliminary approval], the Court preliminarily approved the Settlement and
4 conditionally certified the settlement class. This notice is being sent to you because Defendant's records
5 indicate that you worked for Defendant during the Class Period and that you meet the definition
6 required to be treated as a Class Member.

7 **2. IF YOU ARE STILL EMPLOYED BY DEFENDANT, THIS SETTLEMENT WILL**
8 **NOT AFFECT YOUR EMPLOYMENT.**

9 California law strictly prohibits retaliation. Further, Defendant is prohibited by law from taking
10 any adverse action against or otherwise target, retaliate, or discriminate against any Class Member
11 because of the Class Member's participation or decision not to participate in the Settlement.

12 **3. TERMS OF THE SETTLEMENT**

13 Defendant has agreed to pay \$98,750.00 (the "Gross Settlement Amount") to resolve the
14 claims in the Action. The Parties agreed to the following payments from the Gross Settlement Amount:

- 15 1. **Settlement Administration Costs.** The Court has approved ILYM Group, Inc. to act
16 as the "Settlement Administrator," who is sending this notice to you and will perform
17 many other duties relating to the Settlement. Under the Settlement, up to \$5,000.00 will
18 be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount to pay the Settlement Administration Costs.
- 19 2. **Attorneys' Fees and Expenses.** Class Counsel have been prosecuting the Action on
20 behalf of the Class Members on a contingency fee basis (that is, without being paid any
21 money to date) and have been paying all litigation costs and expenses. To date, the
22 Parties have aggressively litigated many aspects of the case including investigation,
23 settlement efforts, and a full-day mediation session. The Court will determine the actual
24 amount awarded to Class Counsel as attorneys' fees, which will be paid from the Gross
25 Settlement Amount. Class Members are not personally responsible for any of Class
26 Counsel's attorneys' fees or expenses. Class Counsel will ask for fees of one-third of
27 the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$32,916.67) as reasonable compensation for the
28 work Class Counsel performed and will continue to perform in the Action. Class

Counsel also will ask for reimbursement of up to \$9,000.00 for the costs Class Counsel incurred in connection with the Action.

3. **Service Payment to Class Representative.** Class Counsel will ask the Court to provide a service payment to Plaintiff in the amount of \$5,000.00 for Jose Serrano to compensate him for his efforts on behalf of the Class Members in the Action, including assisting in the investigation and consulting with Class Counsel and providing crucial documents to Class Counsel. Plaintiff also may receive a share of the Settlement as a Class Member.

4. **PAGA Payment.** The Parties have agreed on a reasonable sum to be paid in settlement of the PAGA claims included in the Action, which is \$5,000.00. The PAGA Payment is to be approved by the Court pursuant to Labor Code section 2699 and is to be distributed as follows: seventy-five percent (75%) (i.e., \$3,750.00) to the LWDA and twenty-five percent (25%) (i.e., \$1,250.00) to the individuals who come within the definition of an “aggrieved employee” for the purposes of the Settlement (i.e., all individuals who are or were employed by Defendants in California during the PAGA Period). The “PAGA Period” is defined for these purposes to mean the period from April 27, 2021, through March 13, 2022.

After deducting the amounts above, the balance of the settlement amount will form the “Net Settlement Amount” for distribution to the Class Members.

4. **DISTRIBUTION OF THE SETTLEMENT TO THE CLASS MEMBERS**

Each eligible Class Member who does not request exclusion from the Settlement will be deemed a “Class Participant” and will be issued a check for a share from the Net Settlement Amount, which will be distributed pro rata based on the proportional number of weeks worked by each Class Member during the Class Period (the “Individual Settlement Amount”). If any Class Member requests exclusion from the Settlement, his or her share will be distributed to the remaining Class Participants.

Zero percent (0%) of each Individual Settlement Amount will constitute payment in the form of wages (and each Class Participant will be issued an IRS Form W-2 for such payment to him or her), and One Hundred percent (100%) of each Individual Settlement Amount will constitute penalties and interest (and each Class Participant will be issued an IRS Form 1099 for such payment to him or her).

1 There will be no deduction taken from the interest or penalty distribution—it will, however, be
2 reported on IRS Form 1099 as income. Class Participants are responsible for the proper income tax
3 treatment of their Individual Settlement Amount. The Settlement Administrator, Defendant and their
4 counsel, and Class Counsel cannot provide tax advice. Accordingly, Class Members should consult
5 with their tax advisors concerning the tax consequences and treatment of payments they receive under
6 the Settlement.

7 The workweeks you worked for Defendant during the Class Period will be calculated based on
8 Defendant’s records. If you feel that you were not credited with the correct number of workweeks
9 worked during the Class Period, you may submit evidence to the Settlement Administrator on or before
10 [Response Deadline] with documentation to establish the number of workweeks you claim to have
11 actually worked during the Class Period. **Documentation sent to the Settlement Administrator will**
12 **not be returned or preserved, so do not send originals.** The Parties and the Settlement Administrator
13 will promptly evaluate the evidence submitted and discuss in good faith how many workweeks should
14 be credited. The Settlement Administrator will make the final decision as to how many weeks are
15 credited and report the outcome to the Class Participant. If you are unsatisfied with the decision, you
16 may submit an objection, which is explained below.

17 Settlement checks will be mailed to all Class Participants after the Court grants final approval
18 of the Settlement and judgment is entered.

19 **5. THE RELEASE OF CLAIMS**

20 If the Court approves the Settlement, the Court will enter judgment and the Settlement will bind
21 all Class Participants. The Class Participants will then be barred from bringing any “Released Claims”
22 against the “Released Parties” as those terms are defined below.

23 The “Released Parties” are Defendant Hoffman Hospice of the Valley, Inc. and all of its current,
24 former, or future parent companies, subsidiary companies or related companies, partnerships, joint
25 ventures, and, with respect to each of them, all their predecessors and successors, and all of their pat,
26 present, and future employees, officers, partners, principals, directors, stockholders, owners,
27 representatives, assigns, attorneys, agents, insurers, and any other persons acting by, though, under, or
28 in concert with any of the persons or entities listed herein and their successors and any individual or

1 entity who could be liable for any of the Released Claims. Homman Hospice Home Foundation is a
2 Released Party.

3 “Released Claims” shall mean those claims, rights, and causes of action arising out of or related
4 to the facts, allegations, or legal theories set forth in the Complaint or Plaintiff’s PAGA notice to the
5 LWDA, which arose during the Class Period, including claims for: **(1)** failure to reimburse business
6 expenses in violation of Labor Code sections 2800, 2802, and 2804; **(2)** deceptive, fraudulent, or
7 otherwise unlawful business practices based on the foregoing in violation of California’s Unfair
8 Competition Law (Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 17200–17210); **(3)** statutory penalties based on the foregoing
9 pursuant to PAGA (Lab. Code, §§ 2698–2699.6); and **(4)** all claims for liquidated damages, penalties,
10 interest, fees, and costs based on the foregoing.

11 This Settlement Agreement will not release any person, party, or entity from claims, if any, by
12 Class Members for workers compensation, unemployment, or disability benefits of any nature. Nor
13 does it release any claims, actions, or causes of action which may be possessed by Class Members
14 under state or federal discrimination statutes, including, without limitation, the California Fair
15 Employment and Housing Act (Gov. Code, §§ 12900–12996); the Unruh Civil Rights Act (Civ. Code,
16 § 51); the California Constitution; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000, et seq.);
17 the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.); the Employee Retirement Income
18 Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. § 1001 et seq.); and all of their implementing regulations and
19 interpretive guidelines.

20 Class Members who do not request exclusion from the Settlement will be deemed to have
21 acknowledged and agreed that their claims for wages and penalties in the Action are disputed, and that
22 the Settlement payments constitute payment of all sums allegedly due to them. Class Members will be
23 deemed to have acknowledged and agreed that California Labor Code section 206.5 is not applicable
24 to the Settlement payments. That section provides in pertinent part as follows:

25 “An employer shall not require the execution of a release of a claim or right on account
26 of wages due, or to become due, or made as an advance on wages to be earned, unless
27 payment of those wages has been made.”
28

1 **6. YOUR OPTIONS**

2 **6.1. DO NOTHING AND RECEIVE YOUR PORTION OF THE SETTLEMENT**

3 If you do nothing, you will be automatically included as a Class Participant in the Settlement
4 and will receive a settlement payment. You do *not* have to take any further action to receive your
5 settlement payment. It is, however, the responsibility of all Class Members to ensure that the Settlement
6 Administrator has your current address on file, or you may not receive important information or a
7 settlement payment. The estimated amount of your settlement payment if you do nothing is included
8 on the attached *Class Action Settlement Share Form*.

9 **6.2. REQUEST EXCLUSION FROM THE CLASS AND THE SETTLEMENT**

10 If you do *not* wish to take part in the class action portion of the Settlement (the “Class
11 Settlement”), you may exclude yourself (i.e., opt out of the Class Settlement) by sending the Settlement
12 Administrator a signed and completed copy of the *Request for Exclusion Form* attached hereto no later
13 than [Response Deadline].

14 Send the request for exclusion directly to the Settlement Administrator at the following address
15 **by no later than [Response Deadline]:**

16 ILYM Group, Inc.
17 14751 Plaza Drive, Suite J
18 Tustin, California 92780

19 Any person who submits a timely request for exclusion from the Class Settlement shall, upon
20 receipt, no longer be a Class Member, shall be barred from participating in the Class Settlement, and
21 shall receive no benefits from the class action portion of the Settlement. If you want confirmation of
22 receipt of your request for exclusion, please send it by United States certified mail, return receipt
23 requested, or contact the Settlement Administrator.

24 **Importantly**, Class Members who timely and validly request exclusion from the Class
25 Settlement will *not* be excluded from their share of the PAGA Payment. Requesting exclusion from
26 the Class Settlement applies solely to the Class Members’ entitlement to the class action portion of the
27 Settlement and not their entitlement to the PAGA Payment. If you request exclusion from the Class
28 Settlement you will still be entitled to your share, if any, of the PAGA Payment.

1 **6.3. OBJECT TO THE SETTLEMENT**

2 You have the right to object to the terms of the Settlement if you do not request exclusion. If,
3 however, the Court rejects your objection, you will still be bound by the terms of the Settlement. If you
4 wish to object to the Settlement, or any portion of it, you may file with the Settlement Administrator
5 and the Court a written objection stating your name, address, telephone number, dates of employment
6 with Defendants, the case name and number, each specific reason in support of your objection, and any
7 legal support for each objection. Objections in writing must be mailed to the Settlement
8 Administrator—ILYM Group, Inc., 14751 Plaza Drive, Suite J, Tustin, California 92780—by no later
9 than **[Response Deadline]** to be considered. **Objections that do not include all required**
10 **information, or that are not timely submitted, might not be considered by the court.**

11 If you choose to object to the Settlement, you may also appear to speak at the final approval
12 and fairness hearing scheduled for **[Final Approval Hearing Date]**, at **[Final Approval Hearing Time]**
13 in Department **[Court Department]** of the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of
14 Kern, located at **[Court Location]**. You have the right to appear either in person or through your own
15 attorney at this hearing.

16 If you object to the Settlement, you will remain a Class Member, and if the Court approves the
17 Settlement, you will receive payment and be bound by the terms of the Settlement in the same way as
18 Class Members who do not object. Any Class Member who does not object in the manner provided
19 above shall have waived any objection to the Settlement, whether by appeal or otherwise.

20 The Court may, at the time of the final approval and fairness hearing, have certain social
21 distancing requirements or procedures for attendance at hearings. If you wish to object to the Settlement
22 by speaking at the final approval and fairness hearing, you may contact Class Counsel, whose
23 information is provided below, for more information about the Court’s current social distancing
24 procedures. You may also review the Court’s website for the most current information.

25 **7. HOW TO UPDATE OR CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS**

26 If you move after receiving this notice or if it was misaddressed, please contact the Settlement
27 Administrator, ILYM Group, Inc., at **(888) 250-6810** or by email at
28

1 **claims@ilymgroupclassaction.com**, as soon as possible. **This is important to ensure that future**
2 **notices and/or the Settlement payment reach you.**

3 **8. NOTICE OF FINAL JUDGMENT IF THE SETTLEMENT IS APPROVED**

4 Within seven (7) days after the Court has held a final and fairness approval hearing and entered
5 a final order approving the Settlement, if it chooses to do so, the Settlement Administrator will post a
6 copy of that order and final judgment on its website at the following website address:

7 **[Case-Specific Settlement URL (to be added by Settlement Administrator)]**

8
9 **9. IF THE SETTLEMENT IS NOT APPROVED**

10 If the Settlement is not approved by the Court, or if any of its conditions are not satisfied, the
11 Settlement may be voided, in which case no money will be paid, and the case will return to litigation.
12 If that happens, there is no assurance: **(1)** that the class will be certified by the Court; **(2)** that any
13 decision at trial would be in favor of Class Members; **(3)** that a trial decision, if any, would be as
14 favorable to the Class Members as the Settlement; or **(4)** that any favorable trial decision would be
15 upheld if an appeal was filed.

16 **10. QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS**

17 **PLEASE DO NOT CALL OR CONTACT THE COURT.** If you have any questions about
18 the settlement, you may contact the Settlement Administrator at: **(888) 250-6810** or by e-mail at
19 **claims@ilymgroupclassaction.com**. You may also contact Class Counsel at the addresses or phone
20 numbers listed below.

21 **Lawyers Representing Plaintiff and the Class Members**

22 **MELMED LAW GROUP P.C.**

23 Megan E. Ross

24 megan@melmedlaw.com

25 Hannah Becker

26 hb@melmedlaw.com

27 1801 Century Park East, Suite 850

28 Los Angeles, California 90067

Phone: (310) 824-3828

Fax: (310) 862-6851

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EXHIBIT 2

Class Action Settlement Share Form

CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT SHARE FORM

Jose Serrano v. Hoffman Hospice of the Valley, Inc.

Case Number BCV-22-101016

Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Kern

The proposed class action settlement agreement (the “Settlement”) described in the accompanying *Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement* resolves disputed claims against Defendant Hoffmann Hospice of the Valley, Inc. (“Defendant”) arising out of their compensation practices during the period from April 27, 2018, through March 13, 2022 (the “Class Period”) as applied to all individuals who are or were employed by Defendant in California during the Class Period (“Class Members”).

You are receiving this form because you are believed to be a Class Member. **According to Defendant’s records, you worked [REDACTED] workweeks for Defendant during the Class Period. Accordingly, your share of the Settlement is currently estimated to be \$[REDACTED]**, which is an estimate of your allocated portion the Net Settlement Amount, as that term is defined in the accompanying *Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement*. Your estimated share of the Settlement may increase depending on factors such as, but not limited to, the number of Class Members who effectively exclude themselves from the Settlement.

You do not need to do anything to receive money under the Settlement.

If you believe the information provided above as to the number of your workweeks is incorrect and wish to dispute it, please contact the Settlement Administrator no later than **[Response Deadline]** at:

ILYM Group, Inc.
claims@ilymgrouppclassaction.com
(888) 250-6810
14751 Plaza Drive, Suite J
Tustin, California 92780

If you dispute the information stated above, the information Defendant provided to the Settlement Administrator will control unless you are able to provide documentation that establishes otherwise. Any disputes, along with supporting documentation, must be postmarked no later than **[Response Deadline]**.

Do not send originals; documentation sent to the claims administrator will not be returned or preserved.