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Clerk of the Superior Court
By A. Villasenor ,Deputy Clerk

Attorneys for Plaintiff Nicole Amador

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**

NICOLE AMADOR, on behalf of others
similarly situated and the State of California
under the Private Attorneys General Act,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

AURORA HOSPITALITY LLC; AURORA
BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE SAN DIEGO
HOSPITAL; AURORA - SAN DIEGO, LLC and
DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. 24CU015466C

**REPRESENTATIVE ACTION
COMPLAINT**

1. Civil Penalties under the Private Attorneys General Act (Labor Code §§ 2698 *et seq.*)

1 Plaintiff NICOLE AMADOR, on behalf of all others similarly situated and the State of
2 California under the Private Attorneys General Act (“Plaintiff”) brings this REPRESENTATIVE
3 ACTION COMPLAINT against Defendants AURORA HOSPITALITY LLC; AURORA
4 BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE SAN DIEGO HOSPITAL; AURORA - SAN DIEGO, LLC and
5 DOES 1 through 50, inclusive (collectively “Defendants”), alleging as follows:

6 **INTRODUCTION**

7 1. This is a representative action complaint brought under the California Private Attorneys
8 General Act (Labor Code sections 2968 et seq.)

9 2. Defendants failed to pay all regular and overtime hours due to Defendants’ unlawful
10 policy and practice of time editing and requiring off-the-clock work.

11 3. Defendants failed to provide, authorize, and/or permit the aggrieved employees to take
12 all meal and rest periods to which they were entitled. However, Defendants did not pay Plaintiff and
13 the aggrieved employees’ meal or rest period premiums.

14 4. Defendants’ employment policies, practices, and payroll administration systems
15 enabled and facilitated these violations on a company-wide basis with respect to the aggrieved
16 employees.

17 **JURISDICTION & VENUE**

18 5. Jurisdiction of this action is proper in this Court under Article VI, Section 10 of the
19 California Constitution as the causes of action are premised upon violations of California law.

20 6. The monetary damages and restitution sought exceed the minimal jurisdiction limits of
21 the Superior Court.

22 7. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendants because, upon information and belief,
23 Defendants have sufficient minimum contacts in California, or otherwise intentionally avail
24 themselves to the California economy so as to render the exercise of jurisdiction over them by the
25 California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

26 8. Venue is proper in this Court under Code of Civil Procedure sections 393(a), 395,
27 and/or 395.5 because, upon information and belief, Defendants conducted business and committed
28 some of the alleged violations in this County.

PARTIES

A. Plaintiff Nicole Amador

9. Plaintiff Amador is an individual over 18 years of age who worked for Defendants in California as a non-exempt employee from about July 2023 to May 2024. Plaintiff worked as a Receptionist.

10. The State of California, via the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”), is the real party in interest in this action. (*Kim v. Reins Int’l California, Inc.* (2020) 9 Cal. 5th 73, 81 [The “government entity on whose behalf the plaintiff files suit is always the real party in interest.”]) To the extent permitted by law, including pursuant *Balderas v. Fresh Start Harvesting, Inc.*, Court of Appeals Case No. B326759 (2nd App. Dist.) ____ Cal. App. 5th ____ (Mar. 20, 2024, *as modified* Apr. 18, 2024), the PAGA claim is brought exclusively as a representative action and does not include arbitrable claims.

B. Defendants

11. Defendant Aurora Hospitality LLC is a California limited liability company that maintains operations and conducts business throughout the State of California, including in this county.

12. Defendant Aurora Behavioral Healthcare San Diego Hospital is a California corporation that maintains operations and conducts business throughout the State of California, including in this county.

13. Defendant Aurora - San Diego, LLC is a California limited liability company that maintains operations and conducts business throughout the State of California, including in this county.

14. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, or otherwise, of the parties sued as DOES 1 through 50, are presently unknown, unascertainable, or uncertain, and are sued by such fictitious names under Code of Civil Procedure section 474. Upon information and belief, each of DOES 1 through 50 constitutes a legal employer or is otherwise legally responsible in some manner for the acts and omissions alleged herein. This Complaint may be amended to reflect their true names and capacities once ascertained.

1 15. Upon information and belief, Defendants in this action are employers, co-employers,
2 joint employers, and/or part of an integrated employer enterprise, as each of the Defendants exercised
3 control over the wages, hours, and working conditions of the employees, suffered and permitted them
4 to work, and otherwise engaged them as employees under California law.

5 16. Upon information and belief, at least some of the Defendants have common ownership,
6 common management, interrelationship of operations, and centralized control over labor relations and
7 are therefore part of an integrated enterprise and thus jointly and severally responsible for the acts and
8 omissions alleged herein, including pursuant to Labor Code sections 558, 558.1, and 1197.1.

9 17. Upon information and belief, Defendants acted in all respects pertinent to this action as
10 an alter-ego, agent, servant, joint employer, joint venturer, co-conspirator, partner, in an integrated
11 enterprise, or in some other capacity on behalf of all other co-Defendants, such that the acts and
12 omissions of each Defendants may be legally attributable to all others.

13 **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

14 18. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees worked for Defendants as non-exempt
15 employees and were compensated on an hourly basis.

16 19. Defendants repeatedly underpaid Plaintiff and aggrieved employees by not accounting
17 for all hours they worked, resulting in unpaid minimum wages.

18 20. Defendants routinely made edits to Plaintiff's other aggrieved employees' time records
19 without their knowledge or authorization. Specifically, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees often
20 did not have time to clock in from their meal periods because patients needed their immediate
21 assistance. When Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees had short meal periods, they were required
22 to fill out a time adjustment form to provide the time they started working again. However, before
23 receiving time adjustment forms from Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees, Defendants would insert
24 false meal periods to make it appear as if they took a compliant meal period even when they were
25 working during this time. Additionally, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees would clock off for
26 their shift but be stopped by patients and visitors since Defendants were understaffed. Plaintiff and
27 the aggrieved employees would work off-the-clock for a minimum of five to ten minutes to provide
28 additional help. Plaintiff would notify Defendants of this work completed off-the-clock, but

1 Defendants would not include this as time worked. To the extent that the off-the-clock work and time
2 editing resulted in unpaid hours worked over 8 hours in one day or 40 hours in a week, this resulted in
3 unpaid overtime.

4 21. Further, due to employment responsibilities, the continuous flow of business, and
5 Defendants' understaffing practices, Plaintiff and aggrieved employees suffered many short, missed,
6 late, and/or interrupted meal periods. For example, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were not
7 able to leave their post due to understaffing. Even when Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were
8 able to take a meal period, they were often required to cut their meal periods short to help patients that
9 required their immediate help. Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees performed necessary job
10 functions like answering phones and assisting with the line of visitors and patients waiting to be helped
11 during their meal periods. For example, Plaintiff's time records show that she experienced two late
12 meal periods and two missed meal periods in the pay period from November 12, 2023, to November
13 25, 2023. While she was paid for one missed meal period, she was not compensated for the other.

14 22. Additionally, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees often experienced missed second
15 meal periods, typically over the weekends when working over 10 hours due to the demands of the job
16 and understaffing. When Plaintiff and aggrieved employees suffered these deficient meal periods,
17 Defendants did not pay Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees' meal period premiums.

18 23. Similarly, due to the nature of the work and understaffing, Plaintiff and the aggrieved
19 employees were often required to continue working without any time to take a compliant rest break.
20 When Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were able to take a rest period, this would only be for
21 about five minutes and not the lawful 10-minute paid rest period. When Plaintiff and aggrieved
22 employees suffered these deficient rest periods, Defendants did not pay Plaintiff and the aggrieved
23 employees' rest period premiums.

24 24. Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees with all sick leave
25 accrued due to Defendants' unlawful policy and practice of time editing and requiring off-the-clock
26 work. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were underpaid sick pay whenever Defendants would
27 edit their hours worked.

25. Because of these violations, Defendants failed to provide accurate, itemized wage statements to employees that included accurate gross or net wages earned as employees earned overtime, sick leave, and premiums which were not paid at the lawful rate due to the time editing and off-the-clock violations. Further, Defendant had a policy and practice of failing to accurately list Plaintiff's and other aggrieved employees' respective overtime rates and overtime hours worked. For example, Plaintiff's paystub shows that Plaintiff's overtime rate and overtime hours were inaccurate because they were divided into three separate categories in the pay period from May 12, 2024, to May 25, 2024. These wage statement violations sow confusion among Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees with respect to what amounts were owed and paid, at what rates, the number of hours worked, and how those amounts were or should be calculated.

26. These violations create derivative liability for failure to pay all wages owed each payday or upon separation of employment.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

CIVIL PENALTIES UNDER THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT

Violation of Labor Code §§ 2698 *et seq.*

(By Plaintiff on Behalf of the State and the Aggrieved Employees Against All Defendants)

27. All outside paragraphs of this Complaint are incorporated into this section.

28. Plaintiff brings this cause of action as a proxy for the State of California on behalf of the following “aggrieved employees” pursuant to the Private Attorneys General Act (“PAGA”), codified as Labor Code section 2698 *et seq.*:

a. All current and former non-exempt employees who worked for Defendants in California at any time from one year prior to the postmark date of the initial PAGA notice through date of trial.

29. Plaintiff reserves the right to amend, supplement, or add to this description of the aggrieved employees, according to proof.

30. The State of California, via the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”), is the real party in interest in this action with respect to this cause of action. (*Kim v. Reins*

1 *Int'l California, Inc.* (2020) 9 Cal. 5th 73, 81 [The “government entity on whose behalf the plaintiff
2 files suit is always the real party in interest.”])

3 31. Labor Code section 2699(a) provides: “Notwithstanding any other provision of law,,
4 any provision of this code that provides for a civil penalty to be assessed and collected by the Labor
5 and Workforce Development Agency or any of its departments, divisions, commissions, boards,
6 agencies, or employees, for a violation of this code, may, as an alternative, be recovered through a civil
7 action brought by an aggrieved employee on behalf of himself or herself and other current or former
8 employees pursuant to the procedures specified in Section 2699.3. “

9 32. Labor Code section 2699(f) provides: “For all provisions of this code except those for
10 which a civil penalty is specifically provided, there is established a civil penalty for a violation of these
11 provisions, as follows: ... (2) If, at the time of the alleged violation, the person employs one or more
12 employees, the civil penalty is one hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period
13 for the initial violation and two hundred dollars (\$200) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for
14 each subsequent violation.”

15 33. Any allegations regarding violations of the IWC Wage Orders are enforceable as
16 violations of Labor Code section 1198, which states: “[t]he employment of any employee for longer
17 hours than those fixed by the order or under conditions of labor prohibited by the order is unlawful.”

18 34. Labor Code section 2699.3 sets forth the procedure for commencing an action for civil
19 penalties under the PAGA.

20 35. On or about **August 1, 2024**, Plaintiff paid the requisite PAGA filing fee and provided
21 written notice (by online electronic filing with the LWDA and by certified mail to Defendants) of
22 Defendants’ alleged Labor Code violations, including the facts and theories to support the alleged
23 violations.

24 36. A true and correct copy of Plaintiff’s written PAGA notice, entitled “Notice of Labor
25 Code Violations” is attached hereto as Exhibit 1 and incorporated by reference as though fully set
26 forth herein (the “PAGA notice”).

27 37. To date, neither Plaintiff nor Plaintiff’s counsel has received a response to Plaintiff’s
28 written PAGA notice from the LWDA.

1 38. Within 33 calendar days of the postmark date of the notice sent by Plaintiff, neither
2 Plaintiff nor Plaintiff's counsel has received written notice by certified mail from any Defendants
3 providing a description of any actions taken to cure the alleged violations.

4 39. Now that at least 65 days have passed from Plaintiff notifying Defendants of these
5 violations, without notice of cure from Defendants or notice from the LWDA of its intent to investigate
6 the alleged allegations and issue the appropriate citations to Defendants, Plaintiff exhausted all
7 prerequisites and commenced this civil action under Labor Code section 2699 *et seq.*

8 40. As set forth in the PAGA notice attached as Exhibit 1 and incorporated into this
9 Complaint, Defendants committed the following violations and are liable for all corresponding civil
10 penalties:

- 11 a. ***Unpaid Hours Worked/Minimum Wage.*** Violation of Labor Code §§ 1194,
12 1197, 1198; IWC Wage Orders.
- 13 b. ***Unpaid Overtime.*** Violation of Labor Code §§ 510, 1194, 1198; IWC Wage
14 Orders.
- 15 c. ***Unpaid Paid Sick Leave.*** Violation of Labor Code §§ 246 through 248.7.
- 16 d. ***Unpaid Meal Period Premium Wages.*** Violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7, 512,
17 1198; IWC Wage Orders.
- 18 e. ***Unpaid Rest Period Premium Wages.*** Violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7, 516,
19 1198; IWC Wage Orders.
- 20 f. ***Untimely Payment of Wages During Employment.*** Violation of Labor Code
21 §§ 204, 204b, 210.
- 22 g. ***Untimely Payment of Wages Upon Separation of Employment.*** Violation of
23 Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 256.
- 24 h. ***Non-Compliant Wage Statements.*** Violation of Labor Code §§ 226, 226.3.
- 25 i. ***Failure to Maintain Accurate Records.*** Violation of Labor Code § 1174; IWC
26 Wage Orders.

27 41. Plaintiff seeks to collect all recoverable civil penalties for the Labor Code violations
28 alleged in this Complaint and the PAGA notice (including amendments thereto) against Defendants

1 pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(a) and (f), in addition to attorneys' fees, costs, and interest to the
2 extent permitted by law, including under Labor Code section 2699(g).

3 **PRAYER**

4 Plaintiff prays for judgment as follows:

- 5 a. For recovery of damages in amount according to proof;
6 b. For all recoverable pre- and post-judgment interest;
7 c. For this action to be maintained as a representative action under the PAGA;
8 d. For Plaintiff and counsel of record to be provided with all enforcement capability as if
9 the action were brought by the State of California or the California Division of Labor
10 Enforcement;
11 e. For recovery of all civil penalties and other recoverable amounts under the PAGA;
12 f. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit, including expert fees, to the extent
13 permitted by law, associated with the PAGA claims pursuant to Labor Code § 2699,
14 and Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5 and any other applicable sections; and
15 g. For such other relief the Court deems just and proper.

16
17 Dated: October 7, 2024

Ferraro Vega Employment Lawyers, Inc.

18 

19 Nicholas J. Ferraro

20 *Attorney for Plaintiff Nicole Amador*

EXHIBIT 1

Notice of Labor Code Violations

FERRARO VEGA

SAN DIEGO EMPLOYMENT LAWYERS

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August 1, 2024

VIA EMAIL & CERTIFIED U.S. MAIL

Aurora - San Diego, LLC
2108 N St, Ste N
Sacramento, CA 95816

Re: Amendment to LWDA Notice dated July 30, 2024
LWDA No. LWDA-CM-1042503-24

Dear Company Representatives and LWDA Officers:

Please be advised that our office filed and mailed the enclosed Notice of Labor Code Violations to **Aurora Hospitality LLC** and **Aurora Behavioral Healthcare San Diego Hospital**.

This letter is provided to an additional entity—**Aurora - San Diego, LLC**—to provide direct notice of their inclusion in the original Notice as defendant employers and as such each liable for civil penalties under the PAGA for the claims alleged in the Notice.

Please contact our office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Nicholas J. Ferraro

Enclosure – LWDA Notice, dated July 30, 2024 (LWDA-CM-1042503-24)

Cc Plaintiff Nicole Amador

Abeer Abdelhadi, Director of HR Services
abeer.abdelhadi@aurorabehavioral.com

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July 30, 2024

NOTICE OF LABOR CODE VIOLATIONS CALIFORNIA LABOR CODE SECTIONS 2698 *et seq.*

VIA CERTIFIED U.S. MAIL
- Electronic Return Receipt -

Aurora Hospitality LLC
4610 De Soto Street
San Diego, CA 92109

- PAGA Notice & Filing Fee -
Submitted electronically to the Labor and
Workforce Development Agency

**Aurora Behavioral Healthcare San
Diego Hospital**
11878 Avenue of Industry
San Diego, California 92128

Dear LWDA Officer and Company Representatives:

This letter serves as written notice under Labor Code section 2699.3 on behalf of **NICOLE AMADOR** (“Plaintiff(s)”) and all other “aggrieved employees” of the following “Defendant(s)”:

AURORA HOSPITALITY LLC; AURORA BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE SAN DIEGO HOSPITAL

Defendant(s) shall mean and include the foregoing in addition to any other related employer entities, individuals under Labor Code sections 558 and 558.1, and all others who may be later added upon further investigation and discovery as liable employers.

This office serves as legal counsel for Plaintiff. If the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) does not investigate the facts, allegations, and violations set forth in this notice within the statutorily prescribed 65-day period under Labor Code section 2699.3, Plaintiff intends to commence a civil action against Defendants as a proxy and agent of the State of California under the Private Attorneys General Act (“PAGA”). “PAGA allows an ‘aggrieved employee’—a person affected by at least one Labor Code violation committed by an employer—to pursue penalties for all the Labor Code violations committed by that

employer.” *Huff v. Securitas Security Services USA, Inc.* (2018) 23 Cal. App. 5th 745, 751; *Kim v. Reins International California, Inc.* (2020) 9 Cal. 73, 79. Plaintiff maintains standing to pursue these claims against Defendants as an aggrieved employee.

Through this notice, Plaintiff requests that Defendants complete an internal investigation and audit of the wage and hour and employment practices at issue and make a good faith effort to correct any violations. Plaintiff attempts to identify the non-compliant policies and practices affecting the aggrieved employees so that the parties may resolve the underlying damages and penalties in judgment or settlement approved by the Superior Court of California under Labor Code section 2699(k). Defendants are notified that any attempt to resolve this case should be conducted in coordination with Plaintiff’s counsel to protect the interests of Plaintiff, the aggrieved employees, and the State of California via the LWDA. Plaintiff advises Defendants this letter should be also considered a reasonable attempt at settlement of this matter, subject to an exchange of additional documents and information. *Graham v. Daimler Chrysler Corp.* (2004) 24 Cal. 4th 553, 561.

- BACKGROUND -

Defendants employed Plaintiff during the PAGA Period in the position of Receptionist from about July 2023 to May 2024. During their employment Plaintiff and the other aggrieved employees were subject to the wage and hour and employment protections set forth in the California Labor Code and IWC Wage Orders.

Through this notice, Plaintiff informs the LWDA of the Labor Code violations set forth herein. The “aggrieved employees” include Plaintiff and the following individuals:

All current and former non-exempt employees who worked for Defendants in the State of California during one-year period preceding the date of this notice through the current date and the date of trial in any pending action (the “aggrieved employees” and the “PAGA Period”).

Plaintiff reserves the right to expand or narrow the definition of the “aggrieved employees” in the forthcoming civil action. Furthermore, Plaintiff seeks all recoverable civil penalties for Defendants’ violations and reserves the right to supplement this notice as further investigation is completed and further facts, witnesses, and violations are uncovered.

- PAGA CLAIMS -

Unpaid Hours Worked/Minimum Wage Violation of Labor Code §§ 1194, 1197, 1198; IWC Wage Orders

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 1194, 1197, and 1198, along with the California Minimum Wage Order, the applicable local minimum wage ordinances, and the “Hours and

Days of Work” and “Minimum Wages” sections of the applicable IWC Wage Orders with respect to the aggrieved employees.

Labor Code section 1194 renders it unlawful for an employee to receive less than the legal minimum wage for hours worked in California. Labor Code section 1197 further mandates that “[t]he minimum wage for employees fixed by the commission is the minimum wage to be paid to employees, and the payment of a lower wage than the minimum so fixed is unlawful.” Labor Code section 1198 renders “employment of any employee for longer hours than those fixed by the order or under conditions of labor prohibited by the [IWC Wage Orders]” unlawful. The California Minimum Wage Order and the applicable sections of the IWC Wage Orders further require payment of minimum wages for all hours worked. The “Minimum Wages” sections of the applicable IWC Wage Order provide that “[e]very employer shall pay to each employee, on the established payday for the period involved, not less than the applicable minimum wage for all hours worked in the payroll period, whether the remuneration is measured by time, piece, commission, or otherwise.” The foregoing California wage laws require payment of “not less than the applicable minimum wage *for all hours worked* in the payroll period” and California law does not allow averaging of pay over the hours worked in the pay period, even if the total pay results in an average above the minimum wage. *Armenta v. Osmose, Inc.* (2005) 135 Cal. App. 3d 314, 324.

Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees at the lawful minimum wage rate for all hours worked, resulting in unpaid minimum wages.

First, Defendant engaged in an unlawful policy and practice of time editing. Defendants routinely made edits to Plaintiff’s and, on information and belief, other aggrieved employees’ time records without their knowledge or authorization. Specifically, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees often did not have time to clock in from their meal periods because patients needed their immediate assistance. When Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees had short meal periods, they were required to fill out a time adjustment form to provide the time they started working again. However, before receiving time adjustment forms from Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees, Defendant would insert false meal periods to make it appear as if they took a compliant meal period even when they were working during this time. This unlawful practice of time editing resulted in unpaid hours worked.

Second, Defendant engaged in an unlawful policy and practice of requiring off-the-clock work.

For example, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees would clock off for their shift but be stopped by patients and visitors since Defendant was understaffed. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees would work off-the-clock for a minimum of five to ten minutes to provide additional help. Plaintiff would notify Defendant of this work completed off-the-clock, but Defendant would not include this as time worked. This resulted in Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees not being paid for all hours worked.

As a result, Plaintiff may recover civil penalties as an individual and on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees, up to the maximum amount allowed as set forth under the Labor Code.

Unpaid Overtime
Violation of Labor Code §§ 510, 1194, 1198; IWC Wage Orders

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 510, 1194, and 1198, along with the “Hours and Days of Work” sections of the applicable IWC Wage Orders with respect to the aggrieved employees.

Labor Code section 510 requires “[a]ny work in excess of eight hours in one workday and any work in excess of 40 hours in any one workweek and the first eight hours worked on the seventh day of work in any one workweek shall be compensated at the rate of no less than one and one-half times the regular rate of pay for an employee;” and “any work in excess of 12 hours in one day shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the regular rate of pay for an employee;” and “any work in excess of eight hours on any seventh day of a workweek shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the regular rate of pay of an employee.” Labor Code section 1194 renders it unlawful for an employee to receive less than the legal overtime rate for overtime hours worked in California. Labor Code section 1198 renders “employment of any employee for longer hours than those fixed by the order or under conditions of labor prohibited by the [IWC Wage Orders]” unlawful. The IWC Wage Orders further require payment of overtime wages for all overtime hours worked, including the “Hours and Days of Work” sections.

Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees overtime wages and the lawful rate of pay for overtime hours worked, resulting in unpaid overtime wages.

As stated in the “Unpaid Hours Worked” section above, Defendant and engaged in unlawful time editing to make it appear as if a compliant meal period was taken and engaged in an unlawful policy and practice of requiring off-the-clock work. To the extent that these unlawful practices resulted in unpaid hours worked over 8 hours in a day or 40 hours in a week, this resulted in unpaid overtime.

As a result, Plaintiff may recover civil penalties as an individual and on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees, up to the maximum amount allowed as set forth under the Labor Code.

Unpaid Paid Sick Leave
Violation of Labor Code §§ 246 through 248.7

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 246 through 248.7 with respect to the aggrieved employees.

Labor Code section 246 requires employers to provide paid sick leave to its workforce on the terms set forth in the statute. Employers must comply with the accrual, use, and notice provisions of Labor Code sections 246, 246.5, 247, and must further ensure that they maintain the paid sick leave records required by Labor Code section 247.5. Employers have the option of providing 24 hours of paid sick leave to employees or to allow employees to accrue paid sick leave each pay period. If an employer chooses the accrual method, employees must accrue sick leave at a rate of one hour for every thirty hours worked in a given pay period as set forth in Labor Code section 246(b)(1). Under the accrual method, employees must begin accruing paid sick leave at the commencement of employment.

Employers must pay sick leave in accordance with one of the three permissible methods provided in Labor Code section 246(l): (1) “the same manner as the regular rate of pay for the workweek;” (2) “by dividing the employee’s total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee’s total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days;” or (3) “for exempt employee ... in the same manner as the employer calculates wages for other forms of paid leave time.” Labor Code sections 248.6 and 248.7 similarly require paid sick leave to be paid at a regular rate-based calculation in excess of the base hourly rate and at the lawful accrual rate.

Under Labor Code section 246(i), employers must provide employees “with written notice of the amount of paid sick leave available ... for use on either the employee’s itemized wage statement ... or in a separate writing provided on the designated pay date with the employee’s payment of wages.”

Defendants failed to comply with California’s paid sick leave laws with respect to the aggrieved employees. Due to Defendant’s unlawful time editing, Defendant failed to provide Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees with all sick leave accrued. Therefore, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were underpaid sick pay whenever Defendant’s would edit their hours worked.

As a result, Plaintiff may recover civil penalties as an individual and on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees, up to the maximum amount allowed as set forth under the Labor Code.

Unpaid Meal Period Premium Wages **Violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7, 512, 1198; IWC Wage Orders**

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 226.7, 512, and 1198, along with the related sections of the IWC Wage Orders with respect to the aggrieved employees.

Labor Code section 512 and the IWC Wage Orders require that employers provide an uninterrupted 30-minute meal period after no more than five hours of work and a second meal period after no more than 10 hours of work. *See Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court* (2012) 53 Cal. 4th 1004, 1049. Labor Code section 226.7 requires that if a meal period is late, missed, short, or interrupted, the employer must pay one additional hour of pay at the employee’s

“regular rate” of compensation. *Ferra v. Loews Hollywood Hotel, LLC* (2021) 11 Cal. 5th 858, 862 (“We hold that the terms are synonymous: “regular rate of compensation” under section 226.7(c), like “regular rate of pay” under section 510(a), encompasses all nondiscretionary payments, not just hourly wages”). “[T]ime records showing noncompliant meal periods raise a rebuttable presumption of meal period violations, including at the summary judgment stage.” *Donobue v. AMN Services, LLC* (2021) 11 Cal. 5th 58, 61. Labor Code section 1198 renders “employment of any employee for longer hours than those fixed by the order or under conditions of labor prohibited by the [IWC Wage Orders]” unlawful. The IWC Wage Orders, including Section 11 (Meal Periods), further require one uninterrupted 30-minute meal period after no more than five hours of work and a second meal period after no more than 10 hours of work and an additional hour of pay at the employee’s regular rate of compensation for each workday that a compliant meal period is not provided. Pursuant to Section 11(A) of the IWC Wage Orders, the California Supreme Court has held that the on-duty meal period exception is “exceedingly narrow” and applies only when (1) “the nature of the work prevents the employee from being relieved of all duty” and (2) *both* “the employer and employee have agreed, in writing, to the on-duty meal period.” *Augustus v. AMB Security Services, Inc.* (2016) 2 Cal. 5th 257, 266-276 (emphasis added). If these two requirements are not met, then the employer owes the employee one hour of premium pay for each non-compliant meal period taken under the purported on-duty meal arrangement. *Naranjo v. Spectrum Security Services, Inc.* (2019) 40 Cal. 5th 444, 459.

First, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees routinely experienced missed, late, short, and interrupted meal periods in order to keep up with the high demands of the job. Specifically, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees would constantly be required to answer phone calls and assist with the line of visitors and patients waiting to be helped.

Additionally, Defendant maintained a practice of understaffing shifts which resulted in Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees not being able to leave their post. Even when Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were able to take a meal period, they were consistently interrupted. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were often required to cut their meal periods short to help patients that required their immediate help.

An illustrative example of late meal periods is shown on Plaintiff’s time records below:

Mon 11/20			5:57A M	11:39AM	12:10PM	4:39PM	10.18	10.18	477.62
Tue 11/21			2:03P M	7:38PM			5.58	5.58	483.2
Wed 11/22			2:10P M	7:48PM			5.63	5.63	488.83
Thu 11/23	Missed Meal	1.0							
	Thanksgiving Day	0.0							
			8:12A M	2:25PM	2:56PM	4:06PM	7.38	8.38	497.22

Extract from Plaintiff's Timecard Report.

Here, Plaintiff's records show Plaintiff experienced multiple late meal periods taken after the fifth hour of work. In the pay period from 11/12/2023 to 11/25/2023 Defendant compensated Plaintiff for one of these missed meal periods but failed to pay Plaintiff for the second noncompliant meal period in the same pay period in violation of Labor Code section 226.7.

Second, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees often experienced missed second meal periods, typically over the weekends when working over 10 hours due to the demands of the job and understaffing as mentioned above. This prevented Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees from being able to take their second meal period when working more than 10 hours in a day.

Each time Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees experienced a noncompliant meal period, they were owed a meal period premium. As a matter of policy and practice, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were not provided meal period premiums in lieu of missed meal periods as required by Labor Code section 226.7.

As a result, Plaintiff may recover civil penalties as an individual and on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees, up to the maximum amount allowed as set forth under the Labor Code.

Unpaid Rest Period Premium Wages **Violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7, 516, 1198; IWC Wage Orders**

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 226.7, 516, and 1198, and the related sections of the IWC Wage Orders with respect to Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees.

Labor Code sections 226.7 and 516 and the IWC Wage Orders require that employers authorize and permit an uninterrupted 10-minute rest period for each four-hour period (or major fraction thereof) that an employee works. Labor Code section 226.7 requires that if a rest period is non-compliant, the employer must pay one additional hour of pay at the

employee's "regular rate" of compensation. *Ferra v. Loews Hollywood Hotel, LLC* (2021) 11 Cal. 5th 858, 862 ("We hold that the terms are synonymous: "regular rate of compensation" under section 226.7(c), like "regular rate of pay" under section 510(a), encompasses all nondiscretionary payments, not just hourly wages"). Labor Code section 1198 renders "employment of any employee for longer hours than those fixed by the order or under conditions of labor prohibited by the [IWC Wage Orders]" unlawful. The IWC Wage Orders, including Section 12 (Rest Periods), further require one uninterrupted 10-minute rest period for each four-hour period (or major fraction thereof) worked and an additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of compensation for each workday that a compliant rest period is not authorized or permitted.

As a matter of common policy and practice, Defendant failed to provide all rest periods to which Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were entitled. As mentioned above, the nature of work Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees did often required them to continue working without any time to take a compliant break. When Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were able to take a rest period, this would only be for about five minutes and not the lawful 10-minute paid rest period. This prevented Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees from taking lawful rest periods in violation of Labor Codes 226.7 and 516.

Further, when Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees experienced these missed and interrupted rest periods, Defendants failed to pay rest period premiums at the regular rate as required by Labor Code section 226.7.

As a result, Plaintiff may recover civil penalties as an individual and on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees, up to the maximum amount allowed as set forth under the Labor Code.

Untimely Payment of Wages During Employment **Violation of Labor Code §§ 204, 204b, 210**

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 204 and/or 204b and 210, as applicable, with respect to Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees.

Labor Code section 204(a) requires payment of "all wages" for non-exempt employees at least twice each calendar month. Labor Code section 204(d) states all wages due must be paid "not more than seven calendar days following the close of the payroll period." Labor Code section 204b applies to employees paid on a weekly basis and also requires the payment for all labor within the required pay periods. Labor Code section 210 provides "every person who fails to pay the wages of an employee as provided in Section ... 204 ... shall be subject to a civil penalty" of \$100 for an initial violation and \$200 plus 25% of the amount unlawfully withheld for a subsequent violation.

Because Defendants failed to pay all wages and premiums in each pay period in which such wages were earned at the lawful rate, Defendants violated Labor Code section 204 and/or

204b (for weekly employees, as applicable). Defendants violated Labor Code sections 204 and 204b by failing to pay all wages and premiums owed on the regular pay days scheduled each pay period within seven calendar days of the close of the payroll period, as a result of the policies and practices set forth in this notice.

As explained above, Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees all wages owed for regular, overtime, and meal and rest period premiums. Therefore, Defendant failed to pay all wages owed no later than seven (7) calendar days following the close of the payroll period in violation of Labor Code section 204(a).

As a result, Plaintiff may recover civil penalties as an individual and on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees, up to the maximum amount allowed as set forth under the Labor Code.

Untimely Payment of Wages Upon Separation of Employment
Violation of Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 256

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203 with respect to the aggrieved employees by failing to pay all wages and premiums owed upon termination of employment.

Labor Code section 201 requires that if an employer fires an employee, the wages must be paid immediately. Labor Code section 202 requires that if an employee quits without providing 72 hours' notice, his or her wages must be paid no later than 72 hours thereafter. Labor Code section 202 states that if an employee provides 72 hours' notice, the final wages are payable upon his or her final day of employment. Labor Code section 203 requires an employer who fails to comply with Labor Code sections 201 or 202 to pay a waiting time penalty for each employee, up to a period of 30 days additional compensation.

Defendants failed to pay all wages and premiums owed to aggrieved employees during their employment as set forth in this notice, and also failed to timely pay those amounts to departing employees upon separation of employment. Defendants did not pay waiting time penalties for the late payments. As a result, Defendants violated Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203.

As a result, Plaintiff may recover civil penalties as an individual and on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees, up to the maximum amount allowed as set forth under the Labor Code.

Non-Compliant Wage Statements
Violation of Labor Code §§ 226, 226.3

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 226(a) and 226.3 with respect to the aggrieved employees by failing to furnish itemized wage statements each pay period that accurately list all information required by Labor Code section 226(a)(1) through (9).

Labor Code section 226(a) requires an employer to furnish wage statements to employees semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages, “an accurate itemized statement in writing showing:” (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked, (3) the number of piece rate units earned and applicable piece-rate in effect, (4) all deductions, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the pay period, (7) the name of the employee and last four digits of SSN or an EIN, (8) the name and address of the legal name of the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee.

Defendants failed to provide accurate itemized wage statements to the aggrieved employees each pay period as a result of the policies and practices set forth in this notice. Defendants violated Labor Code section 226(a)(1) and (5) by not listing the correct “gross wages earned” or “net wages earned,” as the employees earned wages and premiums that were not paid, resulting in an inaccurate reflection, and recording of “gross wages earned” on those wage statements.

Likewise, in violation of Labor Code section 226(a)(9), Defendants failed to state on employee wage statements each pay period the applicable hourly rates in effect and the number of hours worked at that rate, as Defendants failed to pay all wages and premiums owed to employees. The amounts stated are instead depreciated and underpaid, resulting in an inaccurate reflection on the pay stub.

Defendant violated Labor Code section 226(a)(2) by failing to accurately list employees’ “total hours worked,” as the wage statements did not accurately include the uncompensated time Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees worked due to Defendant’s policy and practice of time editing and off-the-clock work.

Specifically, Defendant had a policy and practice of failing to accurately list Plaintiff’s and other aggrieved employees’ respective overtime rates and overtime hours worked. An illustrative example of this is shown below:



11876 Ave of Industry
San Diego, CA 92128

Pay Statement

Period Start Date 05/12/2024

Period End Date 05/25/2024

Pay Date 05/26/2024

Document 2507

Net Pay \$409.28

Pay Details

NICOLE AMADOR	Employee Number 040923	Pay Group San Diego
	SSN XXX-XX-XXXX	Location San Diego
	Job ASD_Receptionist	GL Company ASD - AURORA SAN DIEGO
	Pay Rate \$23.0000	GL Location ASD - SAN DIEGO
	Pay Frequency Biweekly	Division XXX - NO DIVISION
		Department 4006 - 4006_COMMUNICATIONS

Earnings

Pay Type	Hours	Pay Rate	Current	YTD
Overtime	1.850000	\$11.8500	\$21.92	\$393.24
OT Eve-PM	0.000000	\$0.0000	\$0.00	\$0.25
OT Wknd-Day	0.000000	\$0.0000	\$0.00	\$0.78
OT Wknd-Eve	1.850000	\$1.5000	\$2.78	\$47.73
Regular-Hourly	17.880000	\$23.0000	\$411.24	\$10,086.13

Extract from Plaintiff's paystub for the pay period from 5/12/2024 to 5/25/2024.

Here, Plaintiff's records show Plaintiff's overtime rate is inaccurate because this is divided into three different categories. Additionally, Plaintiff's overtime hours are not accurate because these are also divided into three separate categories in violation of Labor Code sections 226(a)(2) and (9). Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees cannot promptly and easily determine from the wage statement alone the overtime rate and overtime hours worked without reference to other documents or information.

Indeed, these wage statement violations are significant because they sow confusion among Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees with respect to what amounts were owed and paid, at what rates, the number of hours worked, and how those amounts were or should be calculated. The wage statements reflect a false statement of earnings and concealed the underlying problems and underpayments of employee wages.

As a result, Plaintiff may recover civil penalties as an individual and on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees, up to the maximum amount allowed as set forth under the Labor Code.

Failure to Maintain Accurate Records **Violation of Labor Code § 1174; IWC Wage Orders**

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 1174 and the IWC Wage Orders by failing to maintain accurate employee payroll records with respect to Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees.

Labor Code section 1174 requires that employers maintain accurate "payroll records showing the hours worked daily by and the wages paid to, and the number of piece-rate units earned

by and any applicable piece rate paid to, employees employed at the respective plants or establishments.” Section 7(A) of the IWC Wage Orders, which may be enforced through Labor Code section 1198, mandates similar recordkeeping obligations.

Because of the policies and practices set forth in this notice, including the failure to accurately account for wages earned or hours worked, Defendants failed to accurately maintain records in accordance with Labor Code section 1174 and the IWC Wage Orders.

As a result, Plaintiff may recover civil penalties as an individual and on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees, up to the maximum amount allowed as set forth under the Labor Code.

Attorneys’ Fees and Costs
Labor Code § 2699(g)

Plaintiff has been compelled to retain the services of counsel to protect the interests of other aggrieved employees and the State of California. Plaintiff continues to incur attorneys’ fees and costs, which are recoverable under California law, including Labor Code section 2699(g).

- LITIGATION HOLD NOTICE -

This letter imposes a duty upon all defendants and their respective employees, officers, directors, executives, attorneys, human resource and payroll personnel, accountants, and other agents to preserve all physical and electronic evidence, including electronically stored information and emails, which relate to the employment of Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees specified in this notice. Evidence includes, but is not limited to, Defendants’ written employment and payroll policies and handbooks; the aggrieved employees’ personnel files and payroll records, such as paystubs, time records, wage statements, compensation reports, as well as the underlying electronically data in Excel or similar format. Memoranda and internal and external correspondence relating to the subject matter of this notice shall also be maintained. Failure to preserve and retain relevant evidence may constitute spoliation of evidence and result in an adverse inference or sanctions.

If you have any questions regarding the scope of your obligations to preserve evidence, please consult your legal counsel and always err on the side of caution. Periodic or regularly scheduled purges or deletions of information covered by this hold must be suspended immediately.

- CONCLUSION -

If the LWDA does not pursue enforcement, Plaintiff intends to bring representative claims on behalf of the State of California and the aggrieved employees seeking civil penalties for

violations of the Labor Code and the IWC Wage Orders, along with attorneys' fees, costs, interest, and other appropriate relief.

Please advise if the LWDA intends to investigate any of the factual or legal allegations set forth in this notice. Defendants may contact Plaintiff's counsel with any questions regarding this letter or the forthcoming lawsuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicholas J. Ferraro". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicholas J. Ferraro

Cc Plaintiff Nicole Amador

Abeer Abdelhadi, Director of HR Services
abeer.abdelhadi@aurorabehavioral.com