



**For Release:** September 22, 2020

**Contact:** Matt O'Connor, AFT CT - 860/221-5696, [moconnor@aftct.org](mailto:moconnor@aftct.org)

## **Comments on Natchaug Hospital's OSHA Citations Over Safety Violations During the Pandemic**

*State and local union leaders and activists made the following public remarks regarding the federal worksite agency's months-long investigation at the behavioral health facility:*

"Hartford HealthCare (HHC)'s executives should be responsible for ensuring its nurses and health professionals are properly equipped to provide safe patient care," said AFT Connecticut President John Brady, RN. "OSHA's citations are a step toward ensuring that is the case. It is unconscionable to direct frontline caregivers to fight COVID-19 without providing adequate protections. Allowing them to get sick or spread the virus is the height of irresponsibility," added Brady, who previously worked as a nurse in the William W. Backus Hospital's emergency department (ED).

Natchaug Hospital Unions United President Karen Ashlaw said, "we joined our sisters and brothers at Backus and Windham Hospitals at the peak of the pandemic to appeal for public support. It's important for the community to have the backs of frontline workers risking their lives to keep others safe. At the same time, we want our neighbors to know we have their backs, too. Raising safety concerns shows that our nurses, therapists and teachers are fully committed to patients' health and well-being," added Ashlaw, a special education teacher at Natchaug's Joshua Center Northeast.

"These citations don't just validate the safety concerns we raised for ourselves and our colleagues," said Jennifer Pratt, RN, an at-large delegate in Natchaug Hospital Unions United. "They reinforce the value of nurses advocating for our patients beyond the bedside. Speaking out for safe working conditions is a responsibility that we take seriously. It's a role for which we have the full backing of our local, state and national unions; something all caregivers deserve," added Pratt, a psychiatric inpatient nurse at Natchaug Hospital.

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*Natchaug Hospital Unions United, AFT Local 5052, represents approximately 200 registered nurses, therapists and educators at the Hartford HealthCare (HHC)-owned Natchaug Hospital in Mansfield and its satellite behavioral care facilities. The AFT Connecticut-affiliated local is part of the Hartford HealthCare Organization of Professional Employees (HOPE) coalition.*

Attached -

**U.S. Dept. of Labor, Occupational and Health Safety Administration (OSHA) - Sep.8, 2020 citations and penalties**

**U.S. Department of Labor**  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
135 High Street, Suite 361  
Hartford, CT 06103



**COPY**

## Citation and Notification of Penalty

**To:**  
Natchaug Hospital, Inc.  
189 Storrs Road  
Mansfield Center, CT 06250

**Inspection Number:** 1476019  
**Inspection Date(s):** 05/21/2020 - 09/08/2020  
**Issuance Date:** 09/08/2020

**Inspection Site:**  
189 Storrs Road  
Mansfield Center, CT 06250

*The violation(s) described in this Citation and Notification of Penalty is (are) alleged to have occurred on or about the day(s) the inspection was made unless otherwise indicated within the description given below.*

This Citation and Notification of Penalty (this Citation) describes violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. The penalty(ies) listed herein is (are) based on these violations. You must abate the violations referred to in this Citation by the dates listed and pay the penalties proposed, unless within 15 working days (excluding weekends and Federal holidays) from your receipt of this Citation and Notification of Penalty **you either call to schedule an informal conference (see paragraph below) or** you mail a notice of contest to the U.S. Department of Labor Area Office at the address shown above. Please refer to the enclosed booklet (OSHA 3000) which outlines your rights and responsibilities and which should be read in conjunction with this form. Issuance of this Citation does not constitute a finding that a violation of the Act has occurred unless there is a failure to contest as provided for in the Act or, if contested, unless this Citation is affirmed by the Review Commission or a court.

**Posting** - The law requires that a copy of this Citation and Notification of Penalty be posted immediately in a prominent place at or near the location of the violation(s) cited herein, or, if it is not practicable because of the nature of the employer's operations, where it will be readily observable by all affected employees. This Citation must remain posted until the violation(s) cited herein has (have) been abated, or for 3 working days (excluding weekends and Federal holidays), whichever is longer.

**Informal Conference** - An informal conference is not required. However, if you wish to have such a conference you may request one with the Area Director during the 15 working day contest period by calling 860-240-3152. During such an informal conference you may present any evidence or views which you believe would support an adjustment to the citation(s) and/or penalty(ies).

If you are considering a request for an informal conference to discuss any issues related to this Citation and Notification of Penalty, you must take care to schedule it early enough to allow time to contest after the informal conference, should you decide to do so. Please keep in mind that a written letter of intent to contest must be submitted to the Area Director within 15 working days of your receipt of this Citation. The running of this contest period is not interrupted by an informal conference.

If you decide to request an informal conference, please complete, remove and post the Notice to Employees next to this Citation and Notification of Penalty as soon as the time, date, and place of the informal conference have been determined. Be sure to bring to the conference any and all supporting documentation of existing conditions as well as any abatement steps taken thus far. If conditions warrant, we can enter into an informal settlement agreement which amicably resolves this matter without litigation or contest.

**Right to Contest** – You have the right to contest this Citation and Notification of Penalty. You may contest all citation items or only individual items. You may also contest proposed penalties and/or abatement dates without contesting the underlying violations. **Unless you inform the Area Director in writing that you intend to contest the citation(s) and/or proposed penalty(ies) within 15 working days after receipt, the citation(s) and the proposed penalty(ies) will become a final order of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission and may not be reviewed by any court or agency.**

**Penalty Payment** – Penalties are due within 15 working days of receipt of this notification unless contested. (See the enclosed booklet and the additional information provided related to the Debt Collection Act of 1982.) Make your check or money order payable to “DOL-OSHA”. Please indicate the Inspection Number on the remittance. You can also make your payment electronically on [www.pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov). On the left side of the pay.gov homepage, you will see an option to Search Public Forms. Type “OSHA” and click Go. From the results, click on **OSHA Penalty Payment Form**. The direct link is:

<https://www.pay.gov/paygov/forms/formInstance.html?agencyFormId=53090334>.

You will be required to enter your inspection number when making the payment. Payments can be made by credit card or Automated Clearing House (ACH) using your banking information. Payments of \$25,000 or more require a Transaction ID, and also must be paid using ACH. If you require a Transaction ID, please contact the OSHA Debt Collection Team at (202) 693-2170.

OSHA does not agree to any restrictions or conditions or endorsements put on any check, money order, or electronic payment for less than the full amount due, and will process the payments as if these restrictions or conditions do not exist.

**Notification of Corrective Action** – For each violation which you do not contest, you must provide ***abatement certification*** to the Area Director of the OSHA office issuing the citation and identified above. This abatement certification is to be provided by letter within 10 calendar days after each abatement date. Abatement certification includes the date and method of abatement. If the citation indicates that the violation was corrected during the inspection, no abatement certification is required for that item. The abatement certification letter must be posted at the location where the violation appeared and the corrective action took place or employees must otherwise be effectively informed about abatement activities. A sample abatement certification letter is enclosed with this Citation. In addition, where the citation indicates that ***abatement documentation*** is necessary, evidence of the purchase or repair of equipment, photographs or video, receipts, training records, etc., verifying that abatement has occurred is required to be provided to the Area Director.

**Employer Discrimination Unlawful** – The law prohibits discrimination by an employer against an

employee for filing a complaint or for exercising any rights under this Act. An employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against may file a complaint no later than 30 days after the discrimination occurred with the U.S. Department of Labor Area Office at the address shown above.

**Employer Rights and Responsibilities** – The enclosed booklet (OSHA 3000) outlines additional employer rights and responsibilities and should be read in conjunction with this notification.

**Notice to Employees** – The law gives an employee or his/her representative the opportunity to object to any abatement date set for a violation if he/she believes the date to be unreasonable. The contest must be mailed to the U.S. Department of Labor Area Office at the address shown above and postmarked within 15 working days (excluding weekends and Federal holidays) of the receipt by the employer of this Citation and Notification of Penalty.

**Inspection Activity Data** – You should be aware that OSHA publishes information on its inspection and citation activity on the Internet under the provisions of the Electronic Freedom of Information Act. The information related to these alleged violations will be posted when our system indicates that you have received this citation. You are encouraged to review the information concerning your establishment at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). If you have any dispute with the accuracy of the information displayed, please contact this office.



## NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES OF INFORMAL CONFERENCE

An informal conference has been scheduled with OSHA to discuss the citation(s) issued on 09/08/2020. The conference will be held by telephone or at the OSHA office located at 135 High Street, Suite 361, Hartford, CT 06103 on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Employees and/or representatives of employees have a right to attend an informal conference.

**CERTIFICATION OF CORRECTIVE ACTION WORKSHEET**

**Inspection Number: 1476019**

Company Name: Natchaug Hospital, Inc.  
Inspection Site: 189 Storrs Road, Mansfield Center, CT 06250  
Issuance Date: 09/08/2020

List the specific method of correction for each item on this citation in this package that does not read "Corrected During Inspection" and return to: **U.S. Department of Labor – Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 135 High Street, Suite 361, Hartford, CT 06103**

Citation Number \_\_\_\_\_ and Item Number \_\_\_\_\_ was corrected on \_\_\_\_\_  
By (Method of Abatement): \_\_\_\_\_

Citation Number \_\_\_\_\_ and Item Number \_\_\_\_\_ was corrected on \_\_\_\_\_  
By (Method of Abatement): \_\_\_\_\_

Citation Number \_\_\_\_\_ and Item Number \_\_\_\_\_ was corrected on \_\_\_\_\_  
By (Method of Abatement): \_\_\_\_\_

Citation Number \_\_\_\_\_ and Item Number \_\_\_\_\_ was corrected on \_\_\_\_\_  
By (Method of Abatement): \_\_\_\_\_

Citation Number \_\_\_\_\_ and Item Number \_\_\_\_\_ was corrected on \_\_\_\_\_  
By (Method of Abatement): \_\_\_\_\_

Citation Number \_\_\_\_\_ and Item Number \_\_\_\_\_ was corrected on \_\_\_\_\_  
By (Method of Abatement): \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the information contained in this document is accurate and that the affected employees and their representatives have been informed of the abatement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Typed or Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

**NOTE: 29 USC 666(g)** whoever knowingly makes any false statements, representation or certification in any application, record, plan or other documents filed or required to be maintained pursuant to the Act shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or by imprisonment of not more than 6 months or both.

**POSTING:** A copy of completed Corrective Action Worksheet should be posted for employee review

**U.S. Department of Labor**  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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The alleged violations below have been grouped because they involve similar or related hazards that may increase the potential for injury or illness.

**Citation 1 Item 1 a** Type of Violation: **Serious**

29 CFR 1910.134(c)(1): A written respiratory protection program that included the provisions in 29 CFR 1910.134(c)(1)(i) - (ix) with worksite specific procedures was not established and implemented for required respirator use:

Facility: On, or about, March 18, 2020, April 25, 2020 and on an on-going basis, the facility had not developed and implemented a written work-site specific respiratory protection program to address the use of N95 filtering facepieces that were required to be worn by staff who were potentially exposed to respiratory hazards caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Staff members performed or assisted with COVID-19 nose swab testing which had been identified by the employer to be a procedure that could aerosolize droplets, which is believed to be the primary mode of transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Staff members also provided direct patient care to individuals who were suspected of being infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus while test results were pending.

Date By Which Violation Must be Abated: 10/26/2020  
Proposed Penalty: \$11566.00

See pages 1 through 4 of this Citation and Notification of Penalty for information on employer and employee rights and responsibilities.



**Citation and Notification of Penalty**

**Company Name:** Natchaug Hospital, Inc.  
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**Citation 1 Item 1 b** Type of Violation:  **Serious**

29 CFR 1910.134(d)(1)(i): Selection of appropriate respirators was not based on the respiratory hazard(s) to which the worker was exposed and user factors that affect respirator performance and reliability:

A. Adult Unit: On, or about, April 25, 2020, employees who provided direct care to a suspect COVID-19 patient were not provided adequate respiratory protection and were potentially exposed to SARS-CoV-2 virus. Appropriate respiratory protection is an N95 filtering facepiece. The employees were required to be within six feet of the patient to perform tasks such as obtaining vital signs and providing personal care. The patient was not wearing a mask.

B. Adolescent Unit: On, or about, May 12, 2020, employees who assisted with the admission and care of a suspect COVID-19 patient were not provided adequate respiratory protection and were potentially exposed to SARS-CoV-2 virus. Appropriate respiratory protection is an N95 filtering facepiece. The employees were required to be within six feet of the patient to perform tasks such as obtaining vital signs and providing personal care. The patient was not wearing a mask. The patient was suspected to have been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus and was admitted to the facility with a pending test result.

Date By Which Violation Must be Abated:

10/26/2020





**Citation and Notification of Penalty**

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**Citation 2 Item 1** Type of Violation: **Other-than-Serious**

29 CFR 1904.4(a): The employer did not record each work-related fatality, injury or illness case that met the general recording criteria on the OSHA Form 300 or equivalent:

Facility: On, or about, May 22, 2020, the following illnesses had not been recorded on the 2020 OSHA 300 Log in accordance with guidance issued on April 10, 2020 by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration entitled, "Enforcement Guidance for Recording Cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19):

- A. Case No. FPU0004: Respiratory illness contracted on, or about, March 16, 2020, confirmed as SARS-CoV-2.
- B. Case No. NAT0001: Respiratory illness contracted on, or about, March 16, 2020, confirmed as SARS-CoV-2.
- C. Case No. FPU0473: Respiratory illness contracted on, or about, March 18, 2020, confirmed as SARS-CoV-2.
- D. Case No. NAT0004: Respiratory illness contracted on, or about, March 19, 2020, confirmed as SARS-CoV-2.
- E. Case No. NAT0003: Respiratory illness contracted on, or about, March 20, 2020, confirmed as SARS-CoV-2.
- F. Case No. FPU4772: Respiratory illness contracted on, or about, March 23, 2020, confirmed as SARS-CoV-2.
- G. Case No. NAT0002: Respiratory illness contracted on, or about, March 24, 2020, confirmed as SARS-CoV-2.
- H. Case No. NAT1234: Respiratory illness contracted on, or about, March 21, 2020, confirmed as SARS-CoV-2.

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Date By Which Violation Must be Abated:  
Proposed Penalty:

Corrected During Inspection  
\$1928.00

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dale Varney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**Dale Varney**  
Area Director

See pages 1 through 4 of this Citation and Notification of Penalty for information on employer and employee rights and responsibilities.

**U.S. Department of Labor**  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
135 High Street, Suite 361  
Hartford, CT 06103



## INVOICE / DEBT COLLECTION NOTICE

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**Company Name:** Natchaug Hospital, Inc.  
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**Issuance Date:** 09/08/2020

<b>Summary of Penalties for Inspection Number</b>	<b>1476019</b>
<b>Citation 1, Serious</b>	<b>\$11566.00</b>
<b>Citation 2, Other-than-Serious</b>	<b>\$1928.00</b>
<b>TOTAL PROPOSED PENALTIES</b>	<b>\$13494.00</b>

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To avoid additional charges, please remit payment promptly to this Area Office for the total amount of the uncontested penalties summarized above. Make your check or money order payable to: "DOL-OSHA". Please indicate OSHA's Inspection Number (indicated above) on the remittance. You can also make your payment electronically on [www.pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov). On the left side of the pay.gov homepage, you will see an option to Search Public Forms. Type "OSHA" and click Go. From the results, click on **OSHA Penalty Payment Form**. The direct link is <https://www.pay.gov/paygov/forms/formInstance.html?agencyFormId=53090334>. You will be required to enter your inspection number when making the payment. Payments can be made by credit card or Automated Clearing House (ACH) using your banking information. Payments of \$25,000 or more require a Transaction ID, and also must be paid using ACH. If you require a Transaction ID, please contact the OSHA Debt Collection Team at (202) 693-2170.

OSHA does not agree to any restrictions or conditions or endorsements put on any check, money order, or electronic payment for less than the full amount due, and will cash the check or money order as if these restrictions or conditions do not exist.

If a personal check is issued, it will be converted into an electronic fund transfer (EFT). This means that our bank will copy your check and use the account information on it to electronically debit your account for the amount of the check. The debit from your account will then usually occur within 24 hours and will be shown on your regular account statement. You will not receive your original check back. The bank will destroy your original check, but will keep a copy of it. If the EFT cannot be completed because of insufficient funds or closed

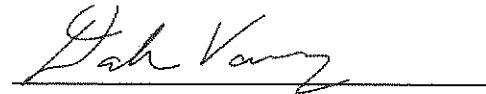
account, the bank will attempt to make the transfer up to 2 times.

Pursuant to the Debt Collection Act of 1982 (Public Law 97-365) and regulations of the U.S. Department of Labor (29 CFR Part 20), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is required to assess interest, delinquent charges, and administrative costs for the collection of delinquent penalty debts for violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

**Interest:** Interest charges will be assessed at an annual rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury on all penalty debt amounts not paid within one month (30 calendar days) of the date on which the debt amount becomes due and payable (penalty due date). The current interest rate is two percent (2%). Interest will accrue from the date on which the penalty amounts (as proposed or adjusted) become a final order of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (that is, 15 working days from your receipt of the Citation and Notification of Penalty), unless you file a notice of contest. Interest charges will be waived if the full amount owed is paid within 30 calendar days of the final order.

**Delinquent Charges:** A debt is considered delinquent if it has not been paid within one month (30 calendar days) of the penalty due date or if a satisfactory payment arrangement has not been made. If the debt remains delinquent for more than 90 calendar days, a delinquent charge of six percent (6%) per annum will be assessed accruing from the date that the debt became delinquent.

**Administrative Costs:** Agencies of the Department of Labor are required to assess additional charges for the recovery of delinquent debts. These additional charges are administrative costs incurred by the Agency in its attempt to collect an unpaid debt. Administrative costs will be assessed for demand letters sent in an attempt to collect the unpaid debt.



Dale Varney  
Area Director

9/8/20  
Date