

The Columbus Dispatch

Former Mount Carmel employees file lawsuit calling allegations against them and Husel false

By Max Filby

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A lawsuit, filed this week by several former Mount Carmel employees, accuses the health system of making up the allegations against its former doctor William Husel. He is facing 25 counts of murder, accused of killing patients with painkillers.

Ten fired Mount Carmel Health employees filed a lawsuit this week, saying the hospital system defamed them and former Dr. William Husel.

Husel has been charged with killing 25 intensive-care patients with high doses of painkillers.

The lawsuit was filed by nine former nurses and one pharmacist in Franklin County Common Pleas Court. It states that the high doses of painkillers that Husel prescribed to patients were typical for a person who was dying.

>>[Read more: Court: Civil cases against Husel, Mount Carmel can continue while criminal case is ongoing](#)

But the lawsuit goes on to state that leaders at Mount Carmel and Michigan-based parent company Trinity Health “panicked” and feared state and federal regulators would “conflate” the high doses of fentanyl with over-prescribing.

The health system’s statements were “designed to create the false appearance that ICU staff had, without any rational explanation whatsoever, been deliberately over-medicating dying patients,” the lawsuit states.

“Because of their ignorance of the applicable standards of care for the withdrawal of life support, the executives thought Trinity’s reputation as a leader in the fight against the opioid crisis would be harmed,” the lawsuit states.

Columbus attorney Douglas E. Graff, who is representing the former employees, did not return calls for comment Friday.

Mount Carmel spokeswoman Samantha Irons said in a prepared statement that the lawsuit’s claim “has no merit.”

“We thoroughly investigated these events and stand by our decisions,” Irons said. “Mount Carmel’s focus continues to be on caring for our community.”

>>Read more: [Husel, Mount Carmel face new wrongful-death lawsuit](#)

The health system has said Husel, 44, of Liberty Township near Dublin, ordered excessive doses of painkillers for 35 patients at two Mount Carmel hospitals over roughly four years before his December 2018 firing. Most of the patients were treated at the now-closed Mount Carmel West hospital in Franklinton, though one patient was treated at Mount Carmel St. Ann’s Hospital in Westerville.

Husel’s medical license has been suspended. He has pleaded not guilty in the criminal case and is free on \$1 million bail pending a trial tentatively scheduled for June 1.

His lawyer has said the doctor was providing comfort care to patients near death and never intended to euthanize or harm anyone.

Husel and Mount Carmel are facing more than 30 wrongful-death lawsuits stemming from the allegations against the doctor.

An appeals court ruling last month cleared the way for civil litigation against Husel to continue before the criminal trial concludes.

mfilby@dispatch.com

[@MaxFilby](#)