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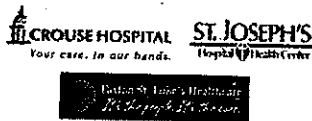
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▶ FEATURED CHANNEL

Hospital employees in lawsuit say they weren't paid for work

By: Eric Reinhardt
 11/13/08 03:41 PM



Hundreds of hourly employees at three of the area's largest hospitals today filed class-action lawsuits saying their employers didn't

properly pay them for their work.

Crouse Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center in Syracuse and Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare in Utica and New Hartford are the facilities involved. Dolin, Thomas, and Solomon, LLP of Rochester represents the plaintiffs.

The lawsuits state that employees may not have been paid if their lunch breaks were either interrupted or missed altogether because of caring for a patient.

"The employer will use a time-keeping system that automatically deducts a half-hour for lunch, regardless of whether the employee actually was able to take that 30-minute meal break," Patrick Solomon, a partner at Dolin, Thomas, and Solomon, said during a news conference today.

More than 200 current and former employees of the hospitals have joined the lawsuits, Solomon said. They include 106 employees from St. Joseph's, 86 from Crouse, and 89 from Faxton-St. Luke's.

Crouse employs more than 2,500 people total, St. Joseph's employs more than 3,000, and Faxton-St. Luke's employs more than 2,600.

Damages could reach into the millions of dollars for each of the three hospitals, Solomon said.

Crouse Hospital participated in a voluntary audit by the New York State Department of Labor in 2005 and 2006. The audit involved interviews with more than 50 nurses and reviews of dozens of randomly selected pay records.

Auditors were satisfied with what they found, Robert Allen, Crouse spokesman, said in an e-mail.

Allen also said Crouse isn't "quite sure about the merit of this particular lawsuit."

In statements, both St. Joseph's and Faxton-St. Luke's said they haven't yet been notified of the lawsuit.

Contact Reinhardt at ereinhardt@cnybj.com

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MANUFACTURING

Empire State Development approves grants for CNY
 The board of directors of Empire State Development on Thursday approved a number of grants and loans with benefits for Central New York.
 The aid was part of \$7.3 million in overall grants and loans the board approved.
 Assistance

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VOICES & OPINIONS

FROM THE PUBLISHER Freddie, Fannie, And The Finger Of Blame

Merriam-Webster defines "blame" thus: "to find fault with or to hold responsible."
 Our nation's capital is busy pointing the finger of blame while simultaneously trying to figure out how to rescue the U.S. market from a meltdown. The primary

TEERING OFF / FROM THE EDITOR Government Consolidation: Taking A Cue from Clay

Amid the difficult economic climate, businesses all across our area and the United States are cutting expenses, consolidating functions, eliminating duplication, and overall just downsizing.
 And government obviously needs to do the same in order

VIEWPOINTS/OP-EDS HCA Responds To Proposed Cuts

State leaders are faced with the difficult task of reducing the growing state budget gap in an increasingly fragile economic climate. Rather than taking actions that will do irreparable damage to the home-health-care system, and harm the patients

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