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## **Law firm says hospital employees in lawsuit need to make claim decision**

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Health-care employees who work for three of the region's biggest hospitals have less than two months to decide if they want to make a claim for unpaid wages.

That's according to the Rochester law firm of Thomas & Solomon, LLP, which represents plaintiffs in lawsuits against Crouse Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center in Syracuse and Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare in Utica and New Hartford.

Employees will receive a notice in the mail explaining their options and how to make claims. In order to make a claim, the employees need to fill out and return the forms to the law firm.

The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York has ordered that affected employees must return claim forms by Sept. 15, or 60 days after the forms were sent.

"Even though the court conditionally certified these cases as collective actions, participation is not automatic. The employee needs to ask to participate. Their potential recovery can be eliminated or reduced each day they wait," Patrick Solomon, one of the attorneys representing the employees, said in a news release.

The lawsuits, filed in November 2008, state that employees may not have been paid if their lunch breaks were either interrupted or missed altogether because of caring for patients.