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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON  
FOR KING COUNTY

NAOMI BENNETT, an individual; and JANET HUGHES, an individual, on behalf of themselves and others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

PROVIDENCE HEALTH & SERVICES, a Washington Nonprofit Corporation,

Defendant.

**CLASS ACTION**

NO. 21-2-13058-1 SEA

AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

Plaintiffs NAOMI BENNETT and JANET HUGHES (“Plaintiffs”), on behalf of themselves individually and others similarly situated, allege as follows for their Amended Complaint for damages and Injunctive Relief:

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Plaintiffs bring this class action complaint against Defendant PROVIDENCE HEALTH & SERVICES (“Providence”) to redress Providence’s policies and practices of underpaying its hourly healthcare workers. Providence systematically, through uniform policies and practices, denies statutorily required meal periods to hourly workers whose shifts exceed 10.5 hours in length and underpays workers their earned wages through an antiquated, uniform time clock rounding policy. Plaintiffs bring this action individually and on behalf of all their similarly situated co-workers to redress and remedy Providence’s willful violations of

1 Washington law and to recover unpaid regular wages, overtime wages, penalties, interest, and  
2 attorneys' fees and costs.

## 3 **II. PARTIES**

4 2.1 Defendant Providence Health & Services is a Washington nonprofit corporation  
5 headquartered in Renton, King County, Washington. Providence Health & Services is  
6 Washington's largest health care provider.

7 2.2 Providence operates numerous hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities in  
8 Washington.

9 2.3 Plaintiff Naomi Bennett is an individual residing in Everett, Washington. She  
10 worked for Providence Regional Medical Center in Everett, Washington. She was employed as  
11 a Certified Nursing Assistant. Ms. Bennett was an hourly, non-exempt employee in Washington  
12 within three years of the date of this Complaint. She brings this complaint on her own behalf  
13 and on behalf of other hourly employees.

14 2.4 Plaintiff Janet Hughes is an individual residing in Olympia, Washington. She  
15 worked for Providence St. Peter Hospital in Olympia, Washington. She was employed as an  
16 Ultrasound Tech. Ms. Hughes was an hourly, non-exempt employee in Washington within three  
17 years of the date of this Complaint. She brings this complaint on her own behalf and on behalf  
18 of other hourly employees.

## 19 **III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

20 3.1 Providence is a Washington corporation headquartered in Renton, Washington  
21 located in King County.

22 3.2 The Superior Court of Washington has jurisdiction pursuant to RCW 2.08.010.  
23 Providence employs putative class members statewide, including in King County, Washington,  
24 and the unlawful acts alleged herein have a direct effect on individuals who work and live in  
25 Washington.

26 3.3 Venue is proper in King County pursuant to RCW 4.12.025.  
27

1 **IV. FACTS**

2 4.1 Providence is one of the largest healthcare providers in America. It employs  
3 thousands of hourly nonexempt healthcare workers and employees in Washington.

4 **Facts Relating to Unlawful Time Clock Rounding**

5 4.2 Under Washington law, Providence is required to (1) track the number of hours  
6 its hourly employees work; (2) pay its hourly employees for the number of hours they work; and  
7 (3) keep accurate records thereof. Providence tracks the number of hours its non-exempt  
8 employees work (“hourly employees”), including Plaintiffs, with an electronic time-keeping  
9 system.

10 4.3 Providence pays its hourly employees, including Plaintiffs, according to time-  
11 keeping system data. Providence requires its hourly employees to use the time-keeping system  
12 to (1) punch in at the start of their shift and (2) punch out at the end of their shift. Providence’s  
13 time-keeping system records and stores the times hourly employees, including Plaintiff, actually  
14 punch in and out (“actual punch times”).

15 4.4 Providence could pay its Employees for all compensable hours using those  
16 actual punch times. Instead, Providence pays its hourly employees, including Plaintiffs, to the  
17 nearest quarter hour in accordance with Providence’s rounding policy, which is applicable to all  
18 hourly employees.

19 4.5 Under the policy, paid time is rounded in seven-minute increments. For example,  
20 were an employee to clock in at 11:53 for a shift scheduled to begin at 12:00, the time keeping  
21 system would report the employee’s start time as 12:00 and pay the employee accordingly –  
22 denying the employee pay for the first seven minutes the employee is clocked in. Were that  
23 same employee then to clock out at 6:07, the time keeping system would report the employee’s  
24 end time as 6:00 – denying the employee pay (again) for the last seven minutes that she was on  
25 the clock.

26 4.6 While the time keeping system, in theory, can also round employee time in favor  
27 of the employee—such as where an employee clocks in up to seven minutes after her scheduled

1 start time, or clocks out up to seven minutes before her scheduled end time—the overall effect  
2 of the rounding policy, when applied in conjunction with other Providence policies and  
3 practices, is to deny hourly employees pay for all compensable hours.

4 4.7 Providence’s attendance, tardy, discipline, scheduling and general time-keeping  
5 policies and practices discourage hourly employees from punching in more than seven minutes  
6 early for their shift, from punching in after the scheduled start of their shift, or punching out  
7 more than seven minutes after the end of their shift or shortly before the end of their shift.

8 4.8 In other words, these policies and practices prevent or discourage hourly  
9 employees from punching the clock in such a way that rounding generally benefits the  
10 employee. As a result, the rounding policy is not neutral and, in practice and over time, it  
11 consistently and systematically favors Providence and denies hourly employees’ their lawfully  
12 earned pay.

#### 13 **Facts Relating to Missed Meal Periods**

14 4.9 Hourly employees are regularly scheduled to, and in fact do, work shifts in  
15 excess of 10.5 hours. Even hourly employees, including Plaintiffs, who are scheduled for a  
16 regular shift of 8.5 hours often, at the conclusion of their regular shift, remain on duty and work  
17 additional hours in excess of 10.5 hours.

18 4.10 Washington law requires employers such as Providence to ensure employees get  
19 two 30-minute, duty-free meal periods when they work more than 10.5 hours in a shift.

20 4.11 Upon information and belief, hourly employees, including Plaintiffs, have meal  
21 periods automatically deducted from their pay. They do not clock in or out for meal periods.

22 4.12 When hourly employees, including Plaintiffs, work shifts in excess of 10.5 hours  
23 in length, Providence does not provide hourly employees with a second meal period for shifts of  
24 more than 10.5 hours.

25 4.13 The effect of Providence’s failure to provide a second meal period for hourly  
26 employees when they work shifts in excess of 10.5 hours is that hourly employees, including  
27 Plaintiffs, are denied pay for all hours worked in violation of Washington law.

1 4.14 As a result of Providence’s uniform policies and practices of rounding employee  
2 punch times and failing to provide a second meal period for shifts in excess of 10.5 hours,  
3 hourly employees, including Plaintiffs, are systematically denied pay for all compensable hours  
4 in violation of Washington law.

5 **V. CLASS ALLEGATIONS**

6 5.1 Plaintiffs bring this action on their own behalf, as well as on behalf of all other  
7 similarly situated employees.

8 5.2 Plaintiffs’ proposed classes are defined as follows:

9 Washington Employee Class:

10 All hourly, non-exempt Providence employees who worked in the  
11 State of Washington (excluding Hospice and Homecare  
12 employees) and who used Providence’s electronic timekeeping  
13 system to track their hours at any time within the period beginning  
14 three years prior to the filing of this Complaint to the date of  
15 certification of the class.

16 Second Meal Period Sub-Class:

17 All hourly, non-exempt Providence employees who worked a shift  
18 of 10.5 hours or more in the State of Washington (excluding  
19 Hospice and Homecare employees) at any time within the period  
20 beginning three years prior to the filing of this Complaint to the  
21 date of certification of the class.

22 5.3 All of the members of the class are collectively referred to as “Class Members.”  
23 All of the members of the sub-class are referred to as “Second Meal Period Sub-Class  
24 Members.” As used in this Complaint, the “relevant time period” is from three years prior to the  
25 filing of this Complaint until certification of the class in this lawsuit.

26 5.4 As enumerated above, Providence engaged in common acts, practices and  
27 policies that violated the Representative Plaintiffs’ and Class Members’ rights under  
Washington state wage and hour laws. Accordingly, Representative Plaintiffs seek certification  
of the proposed class under CR 23.

5.5 Plaintiffs’ claims meet the requirements for certification. There is a well-defined  
community of interest in the litigation and the Class Members are readily ascertainable.

1 a. Numerosity: The Class is so numerous that joinder of all Class Members is  
2 neither feasible nor practical. The membership of the classes is unknown to Plaintiff at  
3 this time. However, based on Plaintiffs' investigation, and on information and belief, the  
4 number of class members is reasonably estimated to be at least several thousand  
5 individuals. The identity of Class Members is readily ascertainable from Providence's  
6 employment records.

7 b. Typicality: Representative Plaintiffs' claims are typical of those of the other  
8 Class Members because:

9 i. Plaintiffs are members of each class and subclass. Naomi Bennett and Janet  
10 Hughes were an hourly, non-exempt employees employed by Providence in  
11 the last three years, whose time-clock hours have been rounded and who  
12 worked at least one shift in excess of 10.5 hours.

13 ii. Plaintiffs' claims stem from the same practices or course of conduct that  
14 forms the basis of the class claims.

15 iii. All of the Class Members' claims are based on the same facts and legal  
16 theories.

17 iv. There is no antagonism between Representative Plaintiffs' interests and the  
18 Class Members, because their claims are for damages provided to each  
19 individual employee by statute.

20 v. The injuries that Representative Plaintiffs suffered are similar to the injuries  
21 that the Class Members suffered and continue to suffer, and they are  
22 relatively small compared to the expenses and burden of individual  
23 prosecutions of this litigation.

24 c. Adequacy: Representative Plaintiffs will fairly and adequately protect the  
25 interests of the Class because:

26 i. There is no conflict between Representative Plaintiffs' claims and those of  
27 the other Class Members.

- 1 ii. Representative Plaintiffs acknowledge that they have an obligation to make  
2 known to the Court any relationship, conflicts or differences with any Class  
3 Member.  
4 iii. Representative Plaintiffs agree to actively participate in the case and protect  
5 the interests of the putative Class Members.  
6 iv. Representative Plaintiffs have retained counsel experienced in handling  
7 wage-and-hour class actions who have already devoted substantial time and  
8 resources to investigating the Class Members' claims and who will  
9 vigorously prosecute this litigation.  
10 v. Representative Plaintiffs' claims are typical of the claims of Class Members  
11 in that their claims stem from the same practice and course of conduct that  
12 forms the basis of the class claims.

13 d. Superiority: Class action adjudication is superior to other methods of  
14 adjudication for at least the following reasons:

- 15 i. The common questions of law and fact described below predominate over  
16 questions affecting only individual members, and the questions affecting  
17 individuals primarily involve calculations of individual damages.  
18 ii. The prosecution of separate actions by the Class Members could either result  
19 in inconsistent adjudications establishing incompatible pay practices or, as a  
20 practical matter, dispose of the legal claims of Class Members who are not  
21 parties to such separate adjudications.  
22 iii. Individual Class Members would have little interest in controlling the  
23 litigation due to the relatively small size of most claims, and because  
24 Representative Plaintiffs and their attorneys will vigorously pursue the claims  
25 on behalf of the Class Members.  
26 iv. A class action will be an efficient method of adjudicating the claims of the  
27 Class Member employees.

1 e. Public Policy Considerations: Employers in Washington regularly violate wage  
2 and hour and other employment laws. The value of individual and employee claims is  
3 often small as compared with the relative cost of litigation. Current employees are often  
4 afraid to assert their rights out of fear of retaliation. Class actions provide putative Class  
5 Members who are not named in the Complaint with a type of anonymity that allows for  
6 the vindication of their rights while at the same time protection their privacy.

7 f. Predominance: There are questions of law and fact common to the Class  
8 Members, which predominate over any issues involving only individual class members,  
9 including but not limited to:

- 10 i. Whether Providence has a uniform time clock rounding policy;
- 11 ii. Whether Providence's rounding policy is facially neutral;
- 12 iii. Whether Providence's rounding policy is neutral in practice—that is,  
13 whether Class Members, over time, are actually paid for all hours worked  
14 under Providence's rounding policy;
- 15 iv. Whether Providence has a policy of providing only one meal period to  
16 Second Meal Period Sub-Class Members who work shifts in excess of 10.5  
17 hours in length;
- 18 v. Whether Second Meal Period Sub-Class Members who missed their second  
19 meal period on shifts in excess of 10.5 hours in length were compensated  
20 therefore;
- 21 vi. Whether Class Members were not paid the required time and one-half the  
22 regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 in violation of Washington  
23 law;
- 24 vii. Whether Providence has a policy of paying for rounded hours instead of  
25 actual punch times;
- 26
- 27



- 1           viii. Whether Providence has a policy that Class Members should not punch in  
2                   more than seven minutes before their scheduled start time or punch out more  
3                   than seven minutes after their scheduled quit time;
- 4           ix. Whether Providence’s tardy policy discourages employees from clocking in  
5                   after the start of their shifts;
- 6           x. Whether Providence has a policy of not paying Class Members for all hours  
7                   worked when it could reasonably ascertain the amount of hours;
- 8           xi. Whether Providence violated Washington wage and hour laws;
- 9           xii. Whether Providence’s conduct was willful.

10                   **VI. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION – FAILURE TO PAY WAGES OWED**  
11                   **IN VIOLATION OF WASHINGTON LAW**

12                   **(On behalf of Representative Plaintiffs in their individual capacities and on**  
13                   **behalf of the Washington Employee Class)**

14           6.1 Representative Plaintiffs reallege paragraphs 1.1 through 5.5 of the Complaint  
15                   and hereby incorporate the same by reference.

16           6.2 Providence’s rounding policy, applied in conjunction with Providence’s other  
17                   policies, is not facially neutral.

18           6.3 Providence’s rounding policy is not neutral in practice. As applied, it results in  
19                   Class Members losing more time under the policy than they gain.

20           6.4 Class Members are not paid for all compensable time under the policy.

21           6.5 As a result of the rounding policy, Representative Plaintiffs and Class Members  
22                   have been denied minimum wage, regular and overtime pay for all compensable hours in  
23                   violation of Washington law, including RCW 49.46.020, RCW 49.46.090, and RCW 49.52.050.  
24                   They are entitled to unpaid wages at the applicable wage rates and prejudgment interest, in  
25                   amounts to be proven at trial, as well as their costs and attorneys’ fees.

26                   **VII. SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION – FAILURE TO PAY WAGES**  
27                   **OWED IN VIOLATION OF WASHINGTON LAW**

**(On behalf of Representative Plaintiffs in their individual capacities and on**  
                 **behalf of the Second Meal Period Sub-Class)**

1           7.1     Representative Plaintiffs reallege paragraphs 1.1 through 6.5 of the Complaint  
2 and hereby incorporate the same by reference.

3           7.2     Providence’s practice of failing to provide members of the Second Meal Period  
4 Sub-Class all required meal periods, and its failure to properly compensate members of the  
5 Second Meal Period Sub-Class for missed meal periods, violates Washington law, including  
6 RCW 49.46.020, RCW 49.46.090, and RCW 49.52.050. They are entitled to unpaid wages at  
7 the applicable wage rates and prejudgment interest, in amounts to be proven at trial, as well as  
8 their costs and attorneys’ fees.

9                           **VIII. THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION – WILLFUL WITHHOLDING OF**  
10                           **WAGES IN VIOLATION OF WASHINGTON LAW**

11                           **(On behalf of Representative Plaintiffs in their individual capacities and on**  
12                           **behalf of all Class Members)**

13           8.1     Representative Plaintiffs reallege paragraphs 1.1 through 7.2 of the Complaint  
14 and hereby incorporate the same by reference.

15           8.2     Providence’s violations of Washington wage and hour law deprived  
16 Representative Plaintiffs and Class Members of pay willfully and with intent to do so, in  
17 violation of RCW 49.52.050 and RCW 49.52.070, entitling Representative Plaintiffs and Class  
18 Members to compensatory damages, double damages, attorneys’ fees, and costs.

19                           **IX. PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

20           **WHEREFORE**, Representative Plaintiffs pray for relief as follows:

- 21           A.     That this action be certified as a Class Action;
- 22           B.     That Naomi Bennett and Janet Hughes be appointed as representatives of the  
23           Class Members, including Sub-Class Members;
- 24           C.     That the undersigned counsel for Representative Plaintiffs be appointed as Class  
25           Counsel;
- 26           D.     A judgment awarding Representative Plaintiffs and Class Members compensatory  
27           damages in an amount to be proven at trial, together with prejudgment interest at  
              the maximum rate allowed by law;

- 1 E. An order requiring Defendant to immediately cease their wrongful conduct as set  
2 forth above;
- 3 F. Statutory penalties as permitted by law;
- 4 G. Reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to RCW 49.12.150, RCW  
5 49.46.090, RCW 49.48.030, RCW 49.52.070; and
- 6 H. Whatever further and additional relief the court shall deem just and equitable.

7  
8 Respectfully submitted this 21st day of February, 2023.

9  
10 /s/ Jason A. Rittereiser

11 Donald W. Heyrich, WSBA No. 23091  
12 Jason A. Rittereiser, WSBA No. 43628  
13 Rachel M. Emens, WSBA No. 49047  
14 Henry Brudney, WSBA No. 52602  
15 **HKM EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS LLP**  
16 600 Stewart Street, Suite 901  
17 Seattle, WA 98101  
18 Phone: (206) 838-2504  
19 Fax: (206) 260-3055  
20 Email: dheyrich@hkm.com  
21 jrittereiser@hkm.com  
22 remens@hkm.com  
23 hbrudney@hkm.com

24 /s/ Peter D. Stutheit

25 Peter D. Stutheit, WSBA No. 32090  
26 **STUTHEIT KALIN LLC**  
27 1 SW Columbia Street, Suite 1850  
Portland, OR 97204  
Phone: (503) 493-7488  
Email: peter@stutheitkalin.com

*Attorneys for Plaintiffs*

1 **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

2 I, Klarisse L. Heffner, certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of  
3 Washington that I have caused service of a true and correct copy of the foregoing document, to  
4 be effected on the following named counsel in the manner identified below:

5  
6 Paula L. Lehmann, WSBA No. 20678  
7 Melissa Mordy, WSBA No. 41879  
8 Mary Sanden, WSBA No. 45608  
9 Margaret Burnham, WSBA No. 47860

10 **Davis Wright Tremaine**  
11 929 108th Ave NE, Suite 1500  
12 Bellevue, WA 98004

13 Phone: 425-646-6100

14 Fax: 425-646-6199

15 Email: paulalehmann@dwt.com

16 missymordy@dwt.com

17 marysanden@dwt.com

18 megburnham@dwt.com

[ ] Via U.S. First Class Mail

[ ] Via Process Service

[X] Via King County E-Service

19 Kathryn S. Rosen, WSBA No. 29465

[ ] Via Facsimile

20 **Davis Wright Tremaine**

[ ] Via Email

21 920 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3300

22 Seattle, WA 98104-1610

23 Phone: 206-622-3150

24 Fax: 206-757-7700

25 Email: katierosen@dwt.com

26 *Attorneys for Defendant*

27  
DATED this 21st day of February, 2023 at Seattle, Washington.

/s/ Klarisse L. Heffner

Klarisse L. Heffner, Paralegal

**HKM EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS LLP**