

Medication Administration Error Reporting and Just Culture: ANA and NLN Perspectives

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RaDonda Vought Criminal Case

Former Vanderbilt University Medical Center nurse, RaDonda Vought, was charged with criminally negligent homicide in March 2022 for a fatal drug error.

- RN license revoked
- Sentenced to 3 years probation

(Timms et al., 2022)

Nursing Workplace Environments

Fast-paced, high-stakes, staffing shortages, varying patient acuity, and risks for work-related injury or illness.

(McClendon & Proctor, 2022)

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Ethical Principles

Health care providers are obligated to do no harm (nonmaleficence)

Vaught truthfully reported the medication error (veracity)

Error consequences should be fair and appropriate (justice)

(Beuchamp & Childress, 2019)

Just Culture

Encourages error reporting while maintaining accountability.

Focuses on choices made rather than outcomes

Five levels of behavior:

- Human error
- At-risk behavior
- Reckless behavior
- Knowledge toward virtually certain harm
- Deliberately seeking to cause harm

Accepts human error without sanction. Investigates systems and choices

Coaches at-risk behavior discussing risks of behavior

Sanctions reckless behavior, behavior with knowledge toward harm, and deliberate harm

(Marx, 2019)

National League for Nursing

A *Just Culture* is supported where errors can be reported to improve processes that promote safety, but where individuals are also held accountable

Today's health care environment is complex, technology-driven, sophisticated, and dynamic

Some level of risk or error activity is inevitable in high-stakes environments

There is a danger in criminalizing health care errors

Errors should be managed internally through astute management, scrutiny, oversight, and continuous safeguards

Errors should be confidential where all parties involved are able to honestly and voluntarily report mistakes

(Poindexter & Malone, 2022)

American Nurses Association

Support a *Just Culture*

Encourage reporting errors so that root-causes of the error can be identified and mitigated

Recognize that systems errors can contribute to mistakes

Acknowledge individuals should not be penalized for errors for which systems errors were at the root cause

(American Nurses Association, 2010)

Express compassion for nurses working among the multitude of challenges in health care settings that increase risk for errors

Warn that safe patient care environments will not be preserved with criminalization of medical errors

(McClendon & Proctor, 2022)

