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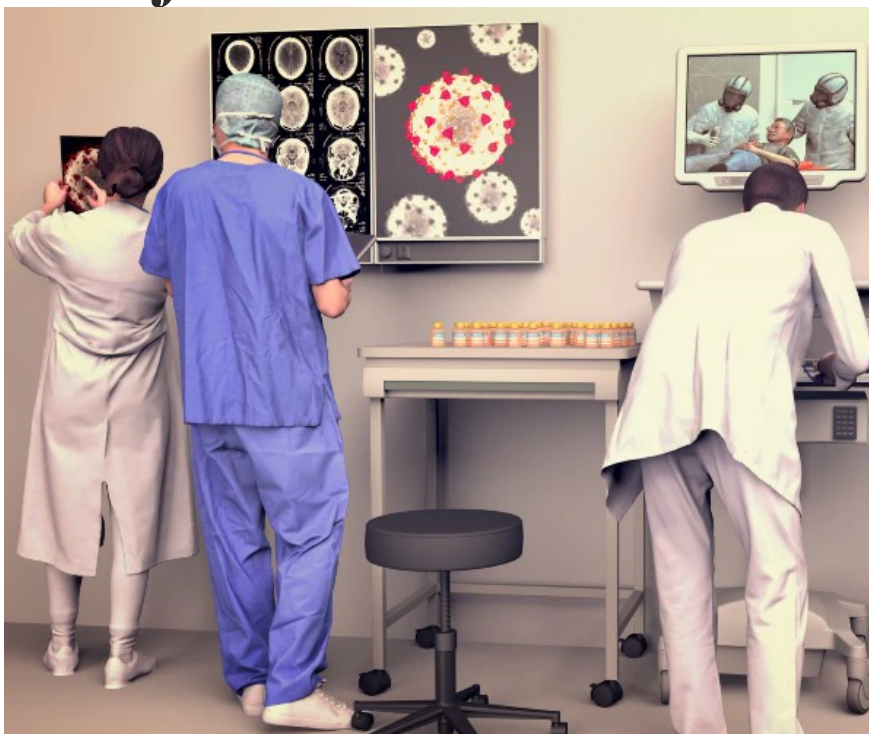
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One Doctor's Idea of COVID Justice Amounts to Injustice



(Vampy1/Dreamstime.com)

**By Suzanne Downing**

Thursday, 02 September 2021 01:14 PM

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Courtney Chavez is not an anti-vaxxer. She made sure her children were immunized and she also had her shots, whenever they were required. But with seven auto-immune diseases and a blood disease, she said "I have a lot going on with my body."

And she's not ready to submit to a COVID-19 vaccine, because she reacts so strongly to medications, even while she needs several of them, including monthly infusions, to live.

That vaccine hesitancy resulted in her physician firing her this month.

Chavez received a shocking letter from her doctor at Alaska Internal Medicine and Pediatrics telling her that since she won't get the vaccine, she is no longer a patient.

"You were notified that to continue receiving infusions here at Alaska Infusion Center you need to have received the COVID vaccine," her doctor's nurse wrote to her on Aug. 11.

"Your physician . . . also feels that if you are so opposed to the vaccine and not willing to heed her medical recommendations that this is not a healthy working relationship and has released you as her patient. She will provide you with 1 month (from the date above) supply of your prescription medications that you receive from her while you find another provider."

That's a challenge in Alaska, where people like Chavez with serious and complicated conditions, already have a hard time finding specialists. Her very life depends on those medicines.

Chavez told Must Read Alaska that she has had the same doctor since 2007; that physician was also her parents' doctor before that. Chavez was shocked. She's never been one to go public with anything about her health, but being forced to take a vaccine has her fired up.

"We went from, 'We need to protect our immune compromised,' to 'We need to force it on the immune

compromised even if we don't know the effect," Chavez said.

"If I had gone and gotten the [COVID] vaccine months ago, I would have gotten the Johnson & Johnson, because it's one shot. But what we've learned since then is that I'm no longer eligible for it," she said. That is because she has a blood clotting disease and that particular COVID vaccine has shown to contribute to blood clots. She can't go on blood thinners to prevent a blood clot, because she also has ulcerative colitis and she'll start bleeding.

She also has Lupus and helps run a Lupus support group on Facebook. Chavez is hearing from more and more people about being refused medical care because of their concerns about what might happen to them if they get the vaccine.

She wants her story told because this is not just happening to her, she said.

"I'm not out here to challenge the law" that permits doctors to fire their patients, she said. "I am just trying to let the public know that our chronically ill citizens need to have a backup plan because this is happening throughout the U.S."

One of her concerns is that if she takes the shot and has a bad reaction, she cannot hold anyone responsible. Doctors and the pharmaceutical companies have complete immunity granted by the federal government.

In Chavez' case, she needs monthly infusions from an infusion center, and now that she's been fired, as a patient, by her healthcare provider, she'll have to find one that will take her. That's no easy task. Since her husband lost his oil field job in 2020, she has no medical insurance to fall back on.

She's on Medicare disability, but many doctors refuse to take Medicare patients.

Especially in Alaska.

"For me, this seems like a violation of 'do no harm,'" she said.
"Actions and choices have consequences, I know that, and this is one. But I don't feel it is ethical," she said.

Suzanne Downing is the publisher of [Must Read Alaska](#) and [Must Read America](#). Read Suzanne Downing's Reports — [More Here](#).

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