

Filipino nurses sue NY firm for employment fraud

By Don Tagala, ABS-CBN North America News Bureau | 12/27/2012 3:27 PM

NEW YORK - Filipino health care workers are suing a New York firm for immigration fraud, forced labor, involuntary servitude, mail and wire fraud, according to court documents obtained by Balitang America.

After going through the legal process of obtaining a work visa, Gwen Almonte, 38 and Rose Quilario, 56, ended up not only with work visas obtained fraudulently but they are now jobless and broke.

Almonte, Quilario and Isidra Tuburan are suing their visa sponsor, Care Worldwide Inc. that claims to be a clinical research company based in Manhattan, New York.

Care Worldwide CEO, Raina Massey and an associate Jerry Sona allegedly promised the victims that her company had many clinical research trials positions to fill and that she would sponsor qualified candidates for H-1B employment.

The Filipinas, who are all medical professionals, allege that Care Worldwide recruited, obtained, processed and provided H-1B visa sponsorship to non-immigrant workers to work in the US without concrete plans of actually employing them.

Almonte, a nurse, said that Massey is charging applicants, like her an initial application fee of \$3,500 which includes immigration fees. But after obtaining their H-1B work visa, they were told that they have to pay another \$3,000 in training fees before they could start working as clinical researchers.

“She told me there was no job as of now, she said that the project will not begin until the next few months, so I believe she misled me, she lied to me for all the jobs that she promised,” Almonte said. “I was out of work, I borrowed money back home, I’m in extreme hardship financially.”

Their lawyer, Felix Vinluan said, “Doctor Massey wouldn’t answer them anymore, instead she shouted at them, she threatened them (that) if they kept on complaining about the lack of work that she could withdraw or revoke the H-1B approvals, so most of these beneficiaries stopped complaining because of the fear that they would lose their immigration status.”

Vinluan, who is also with the Immigration and Employment Advocacy Foundation warned that workers should consider it a red flag when potential employers charge applicants money in exchange for work.

“In the H-1B program, the employer or the petitioning employers are supposed to be the one that shoulders the immigration fees, so if the employer says you have to pay the immigration fees, you better look out, because, more likely than not, it’s a scam,” he said.

The case is pending before the Southern District Court of New York. The summons and complaints have been served to the defendants and is awaiting Massey and Care Worldwide Inc. to file their response.

Balitung America tried to contact Care Worldwide Inc. but their office phone has been disconnected.