Mom Imprisoned for Posting HIV Patient's Medical Info Online

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A 22-year-old mother of three has been sentenced to a year in prison for posting the medical records of an HIV-positive woman online, Hawaii News Now reports. She will also serve five years of probation and 200 days of community service.

According to the article, while working at the Straub Clinic in Honolulu as a clerical assistant in 2007, Rhonda Wong-Fernandez accessed the medical records of a woman she had a dispute with and posted the confidential information on MySpace. While the defense asked for no jail time, deputy prosecutor Chris Van Marter wanted Fernandez to serve a month behind bars. Judge Randy Lee disagreed and felt that a harsher punishment was necessary.

"We are not talking about someone talking stink about someone," Lee said. "We are talking about something very sacred to someone."

Van Marter read one of the several comments aloud in court. "She said quote, 'No wonder she's so pale. She's dying of AIDS. Poor thing, she has HIV. That's why she's hating.' And she ends the comment by saying, "I hope she dies.'"

Wong-Fernandez's defense attorney requested to delay the imprisonment so that she can continue breast feeding her 5-month-old infant and arrange child care for her other children. The request was denied.

In April, the unnamed patient died of a brain tumor.

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