

Cleavon Gilman, COVID Doctor Thanked by Biden, Says He Was Fired for Tweets about Virus

N [newsweek.com/cleavon-gilman-covid-doctor-fired-viral-virus-tweets-yuma-regional-medical-center-1554099](https://www.newsweek.com/cleavon-gilman-covid-doctor-fired-viral-virus-tweets-yuma-regional-medical-center-1554099)

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Tech & Science

By [Jason Murdock](#) On 12/11/20 at 10:03 AM EST

Tech & Science [Arizona](#) [Coronavirus](#)

A veteran emergency-medicine physician working in Arizona has said he was asked not to return to work after tweeting about COVID.

Dr. Cleavon Gilman, whose expertise was recently highlighted by President-elect [Joe Biden](#), told *The Arizona Republic* he was dismissed without warning by Yuma Regional Medical Center on November 23, after his social media posts went viral.

Gilman, who works via a healthcare staffing company called Envision Healthcare after serving as a hospital corpsman in the Iraq war, has used his [Twitter](#) profile to warn the public about the scope and severity of the ongoing coronavirus outbreak.

On November 22, he tweeted he had been informed that there were "no more ICU beds in the state of Arizona" after arriving at work for a shift at Yuma Regional Medical Center. "Where are these 175 available ICU beds in Arizona," he questioned.

Gilman told *The Arizona Republic* that he had received a call the next day from Envision Healthcare informing him that the Yuma hospital did not want him to return.

"They told me it was because of the tweets and I couldn't believe it because that was accurate information I posted to inform the citizens of Arizona," Gilman said.

The Arizona Department of Health Services said in a statement at the time that ICU bed availability had decreased over the past few weeks but claimed there was still adequate capacity. The agency said in November there were 176 available ICU beds.

The *Arizona Mirror* reported on Thursday that data released by the federal government suggested intensive care units in several Arizona hospitals were currently understaffed, while other facilities across the state were reaching their capacity with patients.

"It is a grave injustice and it's not just happening to me. Doctors everywhere are afraid to speak up. All I know is this hospital is trying to crush my voice, they want to silence me and they want to financially hurt me. This is all so wrong," Gilman added.

The physician, who moved to Yuma in June after working in the initial COVID outbreak while based in New York, has prolifically documented how the virus has impacted the Arizona community, sharing personal stories and daily case numbers.

"I've always been HONEST about what I'm experiencing as a... doctor on the frontlines of the pandemic, but @YumaRegional wants to SUPPRESS the TRUTH," he tweeted on Thursday in a post that has since been shared thousands of times.

"Healthcare providers must be able to communicate with the public during a deadly pandemic," Gilman said in the viral thread." This was never about @YumaRegional, it was about the fact that Arizona has ZERO ICU beds, but Yuma Regional thought the public should not know that valuable information during a deadly pandemic."

A message released late on Thursday by Yuma Regional Medical Center said there had been a "misunderstanding" and Gilman was panned to work this weekend. "Oh really... this is news to me," Gilman responded today, added the situation was "unjust."

I've always been HONEST about what I'm experiencing as an ER doctor on the frontlines of the pandemic, but @YumaRegional wants to SUPPRESS the TRUTH. Healthcare providers must be able to communicate with the public during a deadly pandemic.

[@jamielandersxhttps://t.co/SsudtWZnFv](https://t.co/SsudtWZnFv)

— Cleavon MD (@Cleavon_MD) [December 11, 2020](#)

Oh really... this is news to me 🙄 <https://t.co/KMtk7bHarn>

— Cleavon MD (@Cleavon_MD) [December 11, 2020](#)

The hospital's post received a torrent of criticism. "Oops...we fired the doctor that Pres Elect Biden called on the phone to thank for his service?!" wrote Tatiana Prowell, MD, an associate professor of Oncology at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

On November 5, the Biden-Harris Presidential Transition released a video showing a call between the president-elect and Gilman, in which Biden was heard giving his word that the physician would have a "full-blown partner" in the White House administration.

We are thankful to Dr. Gilman and all the inspiring frontline workers who risk their lives to protect us during this pandemic.

We promise you this: You have a partner in the Biden-Harris administration.

<pic.twitter.com/vcDDL0rOLh>

— Biden-Harris Presidential Transition (@Transition46) [December 6, 2020](#)

Gilman's has received a slew of supportive messages after his trouble with the hospital went public, earning praise from some of his peers for speaking out.

"Absolutely unacceptable to attempt to silence and then fire a doc for being honest," said Joseph Sakran, a trauma surgeon at Johns Hopkins Medicine. "Good on you, Dr. Gilman. We will not be silenced," said Emily Porter, M.D., a Texas-based doctor.

According to the latest statistics published on Thursday, Arizona currently has 387,529 confirmed cases of COVID and has recorded 7,154 deaths. Yuma County has logged a total of 21,097 confirmed cases of COVID to date, with the virus tied to 417 deaths.



A "prone team," wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), prepares to turn a COVID-19 patient onto his stomach in a Stamford Hospital intensive care unit (ICU), on April 24, 2020 in Stamford, Connecticut.
John Moore/Getty