

1 Justin F. Marquez (SBN 262417)

2 [justin@wilshirelawfirm.com](mailto:justin@wilshirelawfirm.com)

3 Arrash T. Fattahi (SBN 333676)

4 [afattahi@wilshirelawfirm.com](mailto:afattahi@wilshirelawfirm.com)

5 **WILSHIRE LAW FIRM**

6 3055 Wilshire Blvd., 12th Floor

7 Los Angeles, California 90010

8 Telephone: (213) 381-9988

9 Facsimile: (213) 381-9989

10 Attorneys for Plaintiff

11 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

12 **FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

13 JEANNETTE SANCHEZ, on behalf of the State  
14 of California and other aggrieved persons,

15 *Plaintiff,*

16 v.

17 LAKEWOOD EYE PHYSICIANS AND  
18 SURGEONS, INC., A MEDICAL GROUP, a  
19 California corporation; and DOES 1 through 10,  
20 inclusive,

21 *Defendants.*

Case No.:

**PAGA REPRESENTATIVE ACTION  
COMPLAINT:**

1. Civil Penalties Under PAGA [Cal. Lab.  
Code § 2699, et seq.]

1 Plaintiff JEANNETTE SANCHEZ (“Plaintiff”), based upon facts that either have  
2 evidentiary support or are likely to have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for  
3 further investigation and discovery, alleges as follows:

4 **INTRODUCTION & PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

5 1. Plaintiff brings this action against Defendant LAKEWOOD EYE PHYSICIANS  
6 AND SURGEONS, INC., A MEDICAL GROUP and DOES 1 through 10 (LAKEWOOD EYE  
7 PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, INC., A MEDICAL GROUP and DOES 1 through 10 are  
8 collectively referred to as “Defendants”) for civil penalties under the Private Attorneys General  
9 Act of 2004, California Labor Code §§ 2698 *et seq.* (“PAGA”) stemming from Defendants’ failure  
10 to pay for all hours worked (including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages), failure to  
11 provide meal periods, failure to authorize and permit rest periods, failure to pay all earned wages  
12 twice per month, failure to maintain accurate records of hours worked and meal periods, failure to  
13 timely pay final wages, failure to furnish accurate wage statements, and failure to indemnify for  
14 necessary expenditures.

15 2. For over 50 years, California’s courts and legislature have recognized that this  
16 State’s wage-and-hour laws serve a compelling public interest of fostering a stable job market.  
17 Wages are not ordinary debts. Because of the economic position of the average worker and his or  
18 her family, it is essential to the public welfare that employers obey the wage-and-hour laws so that  
19 employees are promptly paid the minimum/overtime wages that the Legislature has required for  
20 employees. So fundamental are California’s wage-and-hour laws that the Legislature has  
21 criminalized certain types of violations. In extending extra protection to deter violations of these  
22 underlying statutes—since Plaintiff is not seeking general and/or special damages, restitution, or  
23 other damages other than civil penalties—California has enacted the PAGA to permit an individual  
24 to bring an action for PAGA penalties only, which is the precise and sole nature of this action.

25 3. All California employees during the relevant statutes of limitations who are or were  
26 harmed by Defendant’s illegal practices are “Aggrieved Employees.” The Aggrieved Employees  
27 worked for Defendant as hourly-paid or non-exempt employees within the applicable statutory  
28 period.



1           **B.     Defendants**

2           9.     Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based upon that information and belief  
3 alleges, that Defendant LAKEWOOD EYE PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, INC., A  
4 MEDICAL GROUP is, and at all times herein mentioned, was:

5                 (a)    A California corporation conducting business in numerous counties  
6                        throughout the State of California, including in Los Angeles County; and

7                 (b)    The former employer of Plaintiff and the current and/or former employer of  
8                        the Aggrieved Employees because Defendant LAKEWOOD EYE  
9                        PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, INC., A MEDICAL GROUP suffered  
10                      and permitted Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to work, and/or  
11                      controlled their wages, hours, or working conditions.

12           10.    Plaintiff does not know the true names or capacities of the persons or entities sued  
13 herein as Does 1-10, inclusive, and therefore sues said Defendants by such fictitious names. Each  
14 of the Doe Defendants was in some manner legally responsible for the damages suffered by  
15 Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees as alleged herein. Plaintiff will amend this complaint to set  
16 forth the true names and capacities of these Defendants when they have been ascertained, together  
17 with appropriate charging allegations, as may be necessary.

18           11.    At all times mentioned herein, the Defendants named as Does 1-10, inclusive, and  
19 each of them, were residents of, doing business in, availed themselves of the jurisdiction of, and/or  
20 injured a significant number of the Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees in the State of  
21 California.

22           12.    Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that at all relevant times each  
23 Defendant, directly or indirectly, or through agents or other persons, employed Plaintiff and the  
24 other employees and exercised control over their wages, hours, and working conditions. Plaintiff  
25 is informed and believes and thereon alleges that, at all relevant times, each Defendant was the  
26 principal, agent, partner, joint venturer, officer, director, controlling shareholder, subsidiary,  
27 affiliate, parent corporation, successor in interest and/or predecessor in interest of some or all of  
28 the other Defendants, and was engaged with some or all of the other Defendants in a joint enterprise

1 for profit, and bore such other relationships to some or all of the other Defendants so as to be liable  
2 for their conduct with respect to the matters alleged below. Plaintiff is informed and believes and  
3 thereon alleges that each Defendant acted pursuant to and within the scope of the relationships  
4 alleged above, that each Defendant knew or should have known about, and authorized, ratified,  
5 adopted, approved, controlled, aided and abetted the conduct of all other Defendants.

6 **ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL CAUSES OF ACTION**

7 13. Plaintiff worked for Defendants in Los Angeles County, California from  
8 approximately 2013 to approximately October 2022. At all times, Defendants paid Plaintiff an  
9 hourly wage and classified her as non-exempt from overtime.

10 14. Throughout Plaintiff's employment, Defendants committed numerous labor code  
11 violations under state law. As discussed below, Plaintiff's experience working for Defendants was  
12 typical and illustrative.

13 **A. Failure to Pay for All Hours Worked, Including Minimum, Straight Time, and**  
14 **Overtime Wages**

15 15. Under California law, an employer must pay for all hours worked by an employee.  
16 "Hours worked" is the time during which an employee is subject to the control of an employer and  
17 includes all the time the employee is suffered or permitted to work, whether or not required to do  
18 so.

19 16. Labor Code § 510 provides that employees in California shall not be employed more  
20 than eight hours in any workday or forty (40) hours in a workweek unless they receive additional  
21 compensation beyond their regular wages in amounts specified by law.

22 17. Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1198 also provide that employees in California shall not  
23 be employed more than eight hours in any workday unless they receive additional compensation  
24 beyond their regular wages in amounts specified by law. Additionally, Labor Code § 1198 states  
25 that the employment of an employee for longer hours than those fixed by the IWC is unlawful.

26 18. Throughout the statutory period, Defendants maintained a policy and practice of not  
27 paying Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for all hours worked, including minimum, straight  
28 time, and overtime wages. Defendants required Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to work

1 “off-the-clock,” uncompensated, by, for example, requiring Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees  
2 to perform work prior to clocking in for the workday and after clocking out for the workday. Some  
3 of this unpaid work should have been paid at the overtime rate. In failing to pay for all hours  
4 worked, Defendants also failed to maintain accurate records of the hours Plaintiff and the  
5 Aggrieved Employees worked.

6 **B. Failure to Provide Meal Periods**

7 19. Under California law, employers have an affirmative obligation to relieve  
8 employees of all duty in order to take their first 30-minute, duty-free meal periods no later than the  
9 start of the sixth hour of work in a workday, and to allow employees to take their second 30-minute,  
10 duty-free meal period no later than the start of the eleventh hour of work in a workday. Further,  
11 employees are entitled to be paid one hour of additional wages for each workday they were not  
12 provided with all required meal period(s).

13 20. Despite these legal requirements, Defendants wrongfully failed to provide Plaintiff  
14 and the Aggrieved Employees with their legally mandated meal periods. Defendants regularly, but  
15 not always, required Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to work in excess of five consecutive  
16 hours a day without providing an uninterrupted and duty-free meal period for every five hours of  
17 work, or without compensating Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for meal periods that were  
18 not provided by the end of the fifth hour of work or tenth hour of work. Instead, Defendants  
19 continued to assert control over Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees by requiring, pressuring,  
20 or encouraging them to perform work tasks which could not be completed without working in lieu  
21 of taking mandatory meal periods, or by denying Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees  
22 permission to take a meal period. Accordingly, Defendants’ policy and practice was not to provide  
23 meal periods to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees in compliance with California law.

24 21. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees are thus entitled to be paid one hour of  
25 additional wages for each workday he or she was not provided with all required meal period(s).  
26 Defendants, however, regularly failed to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees the additional  
27 wages to which they were entitled for meal periods that were not provided.

28 ///

1           **C.     Failure to Authorize and Permit Rest Periods**

2           22.     Employers are required by California law to authorize and permit breaks of ten  
3     uninterrupted minutes for each four hours of work or major fraction of four hours (i.e. more than  
4     two hours). Thus, for example, if an employee’s work time is six hours and ten minutes, the  
5     employee is entitled to two rest breaks. Each failure to authorize rest breaks as so required is itself  
6     a violation of California’s rest break laws.

7           23.     Throughout the statutory period, Defendants have wrongfully failed to authorize  
8     and permit Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to take legally compliant rest periods.  
9     Defendants regularly required Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to work in excess of four  
10    consecutive hours a day without Defendants authorizing and permitting them to take a 10-minute,  
11    uninterrupted, duty-free rest period for every four hours of work (or major fraction of four hours),  
12    or without compensating Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for rest periods that were not  
13    authorized or permitted. Instead, Defendants continued to assert control over Plaintiff and the  
14    Aggrieved Employees by requiring, pressuring, or encouraging them to perform work tasks which  
15    could not be completed without working in lieu of taking mandatory rest periods, or by denying  
16    Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees permission to take a rest period. Accordingly, Defendants’  
17    policy and practice was to not authorize and permit Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to take  
18    rest periods in compliance with California law.

19          24.     Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees are thus entitled to be paid one hour of  
20    additional wages for each workday he or she was not authorized and permitted to take all required  
21    rest periods. Defendants, however, regularly failed to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees  
22    the additional wages to which they were entitled for rest periods and that they were not authorized  
23    and permitted to take.

24           **D.     Failure to Pay All Earned Wages Twice Per Month**

25          25.     Based on its failure to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for all wages as  
26    discussed above, Defendants also violated Labor Code § 204.

27          26.     Labor Code § 204 requires employers to pay employees all earned wages two times  
28    per month. Throughout the statute of limitations period applicable to this cause of action,

1 employees were entitled to be paid twice a month at their regular rates, including all meal period  
2 premium wages owed, rest period premium wages owed, and wages owed for overtime hours  
3 worked. However, during all such times, Defendants systematically failed and refused to pay the  
4 employees all wages due, and failed to pay those wages twice a month, in that employees were not  
5 paid all wages for all meal periods not provided by Defendants, all wages for all rest periods not  
6 authorized and permitted by Defendants, and all wages for all hours worked. As a result,  
7 Defendants owe employees the legally required wages not paid, and Plaintiff and the Aggrieved  
8 Employees suffered damages in those amounts.

9 **E. Failure to Maintain Accurate Records of Hours Worked and Meal Periods**

10 27. Plaintiff seeks penalties under California Labor Code § 1174(d). Pursuant to  
11 California Labor Code § 1174.5, any person, including any entity, employing labor who willfully  
12 fails to maintain accurate and complete records required by California Labor Code § 1174 is subject  
13 to a penalty under § 1174.5. Pursuant to the applicable IWC Order § 7(A)(3), every employer shall  
14 keep time records showing when the employee begins and ends each work period. Meal periods  
15 and total hours worked daily shall also be recorded.

16 28. Defendants, however, failed to maintain accurate records of hours worked and all  
17 meal periods taken or missed by Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees.

18 29. Defendants' failure to provide and maintain records required by the California  
19 Labor Code and applicable IWC Wage Orders deprived Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees the  
20 ability to know, understand and question the accuracy and frequency of meal periods, and the  
21 accuracy of their hours worked stated in Defendants' records. Therefore, Plaintiff and the  
22 Aggrieved Employees had no way to dispute the resulting failure to pay wages, all of which  
23 resulted in an unjustified economic enrichment to Defendants. As a direct result, Plaintiff and the  
24 Aggrieved Employees have suffered and continue to suffer, substantial losses related to the use  
25 and enjoyment of such wages, lost interest on such wages and expenses and attorney's fees in  
26 seeking to compel Defendants to fully perform its obligation under state law, all to their respective  
27 damage in amounts according to proof at trial. As a result of Defendants' knowing failure to  
28 comply with the California Labor Code and applicable IWC Wage Orders, Plaintiff and the

1 Aggrieved Employees have also suffered an injury in that they were prevented from knowing,  
2 understanding, and disputing the wage payments paid to them.

3 **F. Failure to Timely Pay All Wages at Termination**

4 30. Labor Code §§ 201 and 202 provide that if an employer discharges an employee,  
5 the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately, and that if  
6 an employee voluntarily leaves his or her employment, his or her wages shall become due and  
7 payable not later than seventy-two (72) hours thereafter, unless the employee has given seventy-  
8 two (72) hours previous notice of his or her intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled  
9 to his or her wages at the time of quitting.

10 31. Within the applicable statute of limitations, the employment of Plaintiff and many  
11 other Aggrieved Employees ended, i.e., was terminated by quitting or being discharged, and the  
12 employment of others will be terminated. However, during the relevant time period, Defendants  
13 failed, and continue to fail to pay Plaintiff and terminated Aggrieved Employees, without  
14 abatement, all wages required to be paid by Labor Code sections 201 and 202 either at the time of  
15 discharge, or within seventy-two (72) hours of their leaving Defendants' employment. These  
16 unpaid wages include wages for unpaid work time (including minimum, straight time, and overtime  
17 wages), missed meal period premium wages, and missed rest period premium wages.

18 32. Defendants' conduct violates Labor Code §§ 201 and 202. Labor Code § 203  
19 provides that if an employer willfully fails to pay wages owed, in accordance with sections 201  
20 and 202, then the wages of the employee shall continue as a penalty wage from the due date, and  
21 at the same rate until paid or until an action is commenced; but the wages shall not continue for  
22 more than thirty (30) days.

23 33. Accordingly, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees are entitled to recover from  
24 Defendants their additionally accruing wages for each day they were not paid, at their regular  
25 hourly rate of pay, up to thirty (30) days maximum pursuant to Labor Code § 203.

26 **G. Failure to Furnish Accurate Itemized Wage Statements**

27 34. Labor Code § 226(a) provides that every employer shall furnish each of his or her  
28 employees an accurate itemized wage statement in writing showing nine pieces of information,

1 including: (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, (3) the number of piece-  
2 rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all  
3 deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated  
4 and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the  
5 employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and the last four digits of his or her social security  
6 number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name  
7 and address of the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect  
8 during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the  
9 employee. An employee is presumed to suffer an injury if this information is missing. (Labor Code  
10 § 226(e)(2)(B)(iii).)

11 35. The statute further provides: “An employee suffering injury as a result of a knowing  
12 and intentional failure by an employer to comply with subdivision (a) is entitled to recover the  
13 greater of all actual damages or fifty dollars (\$50) for the initial pay period in which a violation  
14 occurs and one hundred dollars (\$100) per employee for each violation in a subsequent pay period,  
15 not to exceed an aggregate penalty of four thousand dollars (\$4,000), and is entitled to an award  
16 of costs and reasonable attorney’s fees.” (Labor Code § 226(e)(1).)

17 36. Throughout the statutory period, Defendants failed to furnish Plaintiff and the  
18 Aggrieved Employees with accurate, itemized wage statements showing all applicable hourly rates,  
19 and all gross and net wages earned (including correct hours worked, correct wages for meal periods  
20 that were not provided in accordance with California law, and correct wages for rest periods that  
21 were not authorized and permitted to take in accordance with California law).

22 37. Because Defendants violated Labor Code § 226, Plaintiff and similarly Aggrieved  
23 Employees suffered injury and damage to their statutorily protected rights. Accordingly, Plaintiff  
24 and similarly Aggrieved Employees are entitled to recover from Defendants the greater of their  
25 actual damages caused by Defendants’ failure to comply with Labor Code § 226(a), or an aggregate  
26 penalty not exceeding four thousand dollars (\$4,000) dollars per employee.

27 **H. Failure to Indemnify for Necessary Expenditures**

28 38. Labor Code § 2802(a) provides that employers shall indemnify his or her employees

1 for all necessary business expenditures or losses that have been incurred by the employees in direct  
2 discharge of his or her duties. Throughout the statute of limitations period applicable to this cause  
3 of action, Defendants wrongfully required Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to pay expenses  
4 that they incurred in direct discharge of their duties for Defendants. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved  
5 Employees regularly paid out-of-pocket for necessary employment-related expenses, including,  
6 without limitation, use of personal cell phones. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees incurred  
7 substantial expenses as a direct result of performing their job duties for Defendants, but Defendants  
8 failed to indemnify Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for these employment-related expenses.

9 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

10 **(Against all Defendants for Civil Penalties Under the Private Attorneys General Act of**  
11 **2004, Cal. Lab. Code § 2698 et seq.)**

12 39. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges all preceding paragraphs as though  
13 fully set forth herein.

14 40. At all times herein mentioned, Defendants were subject to the Labor Code of the  
15 State of California and the applicable IWC Orders.

16 41. California Labor Code § 2699(a) specifically provides for a private right of action  
17 to recover penalties for violations of the Labor Code: “Notwithstanding any other provision of law,  
18 any provision of this code that provides for a civil penalty to be assessed and collected by the Labor  
19 and Workforce Development Agency or any of its departments, divisions, commissions, boards,  
20 agencies, or employees, for a violation of this code, may, as an alternative, be recovered through a  
21 civil action brought by an aggrieved employee on behalf of himself or herself and other current or  
22 former employees pursuant to the procedures specified in Section 2699.3.”

23 42. Plaintiff has exhausted her administrative remedies pursuant to California Labor  
24 Code § 2699.3. On June 21, 2023, she gave written notice by online filing to the Labor and  
25 Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) and by certified mail to Defendants of the specific  
26 provisions of the Labor Code that Defendants have violated against Plaintiff and current and former  
27 Aggrieved Employees, including the facts and theories to support the violations. Plaintiff also paid  
28 the filing fee on June 21, 2023. Plaintiff’s PAGA case number is LWDA-CM-963625-23

1 (*Jeannette Sanchez v. Lakewood Eye Physicians and Surgeons, Inc., A Medical Group et al.*).

2 43. The statute of limitations is tolled while a plaintiff exhausts his or her administrative  
3 remedies with California's LWDA prior to suit, which is required by the statute. (*See* Labor Code  
4 § 2699.3(d).)

5 44. More than sixty-five (65) days has elapsed since Plaintiff provided notice, but the  
6 LWDA has not indicated that it intends to investigate Defendants' Labor Code violations discussed  
7 in the notice. Accordingly, Plaintiff may commence a civil action to recover penalties under Labor  
8 Code § 2699 pursuant to § 2699.3 for the violations of the Labor Code described in this Complaint.  
9 These penalties include, but are not limited to, penalties under California Labor Code §§ 210,  
10 226.3, 1174.5, 1197.1, and 2699(f)(2).

11 45. Based on the conduct described in this Complaint, Plaintiff is entitled to an award  
12 of civil penalties on behalf of the State of California and similarly Aggrieved Employees of  
13 Defendants. The exact amount of the applicable penalties, in all, is in an amount to be shown  
14 according to proof at trial. These penalties are in addition to all other remedies permitted by law.

15 46. In addition, Plaintiff seeks an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant  
16 to Labor Code § 2699(g)(1), which states, "Any employee who prevails in any action shall be  
17 entitled to an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs."

18 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

19 Plaintiff, on behalf of all similarly aggrieved employees, prays for relief and judgment  
20 against Defendants, jointly and severally, as follows:

21 1. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated the California  
22 Labor Code by failing to pay for all hours worked (minimum, straight time, and overtime wages),  
23 failing to provide meal periods, failing to authorize and permit rest periods, failing to pay all earned  
24 wages twice per month, failing to maintain accurate records of hours worked and meal periods,  
25 failing to timely pay final wages, failing to furnish accurate wage statements, and failing to  
26 indemnify for necessary expenditures;

27 2. An award of civil penalties on behalf of herself and all similarly aggrieved  
28 employees pursuant to PAGA;

3. Pre-judgment and post-judgment interest at the maximum rate allowed;
4. Attorneys' fees and costs reasonably incurred;
5. Injunctive and declaratory relief to the extent allowed by PAGA; and,
6. Such other and further relief that the Court deems proper.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: September 29, 2023

**WILSHIRE LAW FIRM**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Justin F. Marquez  
Arrash T. Fattahi

Attorneys for Plaintiff