

## Ascension Employee Benefits Atty Joins Crowell & Moring

By Jack Rodgers

*Law360 (October 28, 2022, 2:44 PM EDT)* -- A senior attorney at Ascension Health Alliance, one of the largest private health care systems in the U.S., has joined Crowell & Moring LLP's team in Washington, D.C.

Kristy Wrigley-Durer joined Crowell & Moring earlier this month after a decade working on employee benefits at Ascension, the firm said Friday. Most recently, Wrigley-Durer helped ensure the tax and legal compliance of benefits associated with 200 employer-sponsored benefit and compensation plans for more than 150,000 employees.



Kristy Wrigley-Durer

Wrigley-Durer will work with the firm's tax, labor and employment, and corporate groups, the firm said. She will continue her work on employment benefits and with matters involving the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

She will also contribute to the firm's health care group and Crowell Health Solutions, its health care consulting practice, dealing with benefits issues related to the Affordable Care Act, the firm said.

Wrigley-Durer also will work with corporate transactions and restructurings, strategic collaborations, and mergers and acquisitions. Her clients include corporate executives and individuals negotiating employment and equity issues, the firm said.

In addition to that work, Wrigley-Durer's practice focuses on benefits for tax-exempt employers, like religious institutions, to get plans exempted from some ERISA requirements. That work also extends to public charities, and tax and exemption planning, the firm said.

Wrigley-Durer, a graduate of Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, spent six years at Greensfelder Hemker & Gale PC, according to her LinkedIn profile. Her practice included qualified and nonqualified retirement plans, health and welfare issues, and executive compensation.

Wrigley-Durer told Law360 Pulse on Friday it was the right time to move back into private practice.

While new ERISA issues are continually cropping up, Wrigley-Durer said, with the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling in *Dobbs* allowing states to ban abortion, corporations were now taking into consideration some offerings to close gaps in availability.

"There's a lot of uncertainty in terms of how that can and should be structured under a benefit plan," she said. "That will be a trending topic for a while until that law gets resettled."

In some instances, companies were examining how to subsidize travel expenses for employees who need the procedure, Wrigley-Durer said.

"In states, for instance, where the coverage isn't available, a lot of employers are looking at potential travel benefits and what are the implications of that, both under ERISA and tax law and applicable state laws. There's a lot of implications there," she said.

Wrigley-Durer said she enjoys solving complex problems in her work.

"These benefit issues are always very complex, and it's not just on ERISA. It's often the tax side of things can get really thorny; there's a lot of gray," she said. "I really enjoy digging into a complex problem and trying to find a solution that benefits the client."

David Blair, chairman of Crowell & Moring's tax group, said in a statement that Wrigley-Durer's experience working with hundreds of benefit plans would be essential to firm clients.

"She will have an immediate impact on the work we can provide for our clients, especially as it relates to qualified plans ... and ERISA controversy," he said.

--Additional reporting by Jimmy Hoover and Hannah Albarazi. Editing by Brian Baresch.