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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING

IN THE MATTER OF
DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

PAULA J. THOMAS, R.N.,

ORDER GRANTING STAY

Respondent

On May 14, 1999, the Board of Nursing issued its Final Decision and Order in the above-captioned matter. By the terms of the board's order, respondent's license to practice as a registered nurse in Wisconsin was suspended for an indefinite period, with provision for successive three month stays of the suspension, conditioned upon her continued compliance with limitations on her license. Among these are that respondent participate in an approved drug treatment program, abstain from the use of alcohol and controlled substances and submit to drug screens on at least a weekly basis.

On November 5, 1999, the board considered evidence that respondent had violated the board's Order on two occasions by relapsing to the use of controlled substances and by failure to submit to the minimum number of required drug screens in July, 1999. Under the board's Order, violation of any of the terms of the board's Order shall be construed as conduct imperiling public health, safety and welfare and may result in summary suspension of respondent's license. Accordingly, the board suspended the license by its Order dated November 11, 1999.

By letters dated December 27, 1999, and March 1, 2000, Ms. Thomas requested reinstatement of the stay of the suspension of her license. The board considered the request at its meeting of March 3, 2000, and granted the request by its Order dated March 10, 2000.

On July 7, 2000, the board considered Ms. Thomas' request for a further three month stay, and her request that the number of required therapy sessions and urine screens each be reduced to two per month. The board granted the decrease in the number of therapy sessions, but denied the request for a reduction in the number of required urine screens.

By her letter dated October 11, 2000, Ms. Thomas requested a further stay of the suspension of her license, and again requested that the number of urine screens be reduced. The board granted the requests by its Order dated November 14, 2000.

By letter dated February 22, 2001, Ms. Thomas requested a further three month stay of the suspension of her license. The board granted the stay.

On June 1, 2001, the board considered Ms. Thomas' request for a termination of all the limitations on her license. The board granted the stay, denied the unlimited license, and removed the prohibition on access to controlled substances in her work setting.

On September 6, the board considered Ms. Thomas' further request that all limitations on her license be terminated based upon her contention that she has been compliant for more than two years. After informing itself of the history of this matter, the board agreed with the board's monitor that if Ms. Thomas continues to be compliant, two years of full compliance will occur on March 2, 2002. Accordingly, the board granted a three month stay.

On December 6, 2001, the board considered Ms. Thomas' request for a further three month stay, and that the number of required screens be reduced to one per month.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the suspension of the license of Paula J. Thomas, R.N., to practice as a professional nurse in Wisconsin is stayed for a period of three months. Ms. Thomas may petition for further three month stays of the suspension, which shall be granted upon evidence of full compliance with the terms and conditions of the board's May 14, 1999, Final decision and Order, as modified, during the preceding three month period.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Ms. Thomas' request that the number of required urine screens be reduced to fewer than two per month is denied.

Dated this 18th day of December, 2001.

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BOARD OF NURSING

Linda Sanner, RN
Vice Chair