

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

MELISSA L. NORTHWOOD, R.N.,
RESPONDENT.

:
:
: FINAL DECISION AND ORDER
:
: **0003021**
:

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 13 NUR 633

The parties to this action for the purpose of Wis. Stat. § 227.53 are:

Melissa L. Northwood, R.N.
1825 East Ave. S.
La Crosse, WI 54601

Wisconsin Board of Nursing
P.O. Box 8366
Madison, WI 53708-8366

Division of Legal Services and Compliance
Department of Safety and Professional Services
P.O. Box 7190
Madison, WI 53707-7190

The parties in this matter agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final disposition of this matter, subject to the approval of the Wisconsin Board of Nursing (Board). The Board has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

Accordingly, the Board in this matter adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent Melissa L. Northwood, R.N., (dob October 14, 1977) is licensed in the State of Wisconsin as a professional nurse, having license number 178558-30, first issued on August 8, 2011 and current through February 28, 2014. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) is 1825 East Avenue South, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601.

2. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Respondent was employed as a professional nurse at medical clinic (Clinic), located in Onalaska, Wisconsin.

3. The Respondent's employer, the Clinic, operates an Opioid Treatment Program, where patients can elect to take home medication. The clinic is required by federal law to have a Diversion Control Plan.

4. On November 9, 2013, Respondent violated the Clinic's written Diversion Control Plan based on the following facts:

- a. Respondent noticed that the Clinic did not have enough take-home medication bottles and made the decision, without seeking prior authorization, to dispense two days' worth of take-home doses of methadone to 135 patients in a single, non-approved, medication bottle, contrary to the Clinic's Diversion Control Plan.
- b. On November 10, 2013, Clinic staff attempted to contact all 135 patients by their listed phone number and their emergency contacts. This resulted in 62 successful contacts, with 40 voicemail messages and 8 emergency contacts made. Twenty six (26) patients reported back to the Clinic with their medication. Three (3) patients were suspected of possible diversion. All patients that returned to the Clinic were assessed, including vital signs.
- c. On November 11, 2013, staff again attempted to contact the remaining 73 patients that were not contacted on November 10, 2013. This resulted in 64 successful contacts. Of the 64, 59 patients returned to the Clinic with three (3) patients suspected of diversion. All patients that returned to the Clinic were assessed, including vital signs.
- d. On November 12, 2013, all patients who were not contacted successfully were placed on hold to be assessed by the medical director and deemed to be appropriate for medication. At the close of business, all patients returned to the Clinic with no apparent medical issues.

5. In resolution of this matter, Respondent consents to the entry of the following Conclusions of Law and Order.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Wisconsin Board of Nursing has jurisdiction to act in this matter pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 441.07, and is authorized to enter into the attached Stipulation pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 227.44(5).

2. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Melissa L. Northwood, R.N., violated Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(1)(a), by violating the standards of practice as set forth in Wis. Admin. Code § N 6.03(2)(a).

3. Wis. Stat. § N 6.03(2)(a), states that in the performance of delegated medical acts a professional nurse shall accept only those delegated medical acts for which there are protocols or written or verbal order.

4. Pursuant to 42 C.F.R. § 8.12(c)(2), an Opioid Treatment Program must maintain a current Diversion Control Plan as part of its quality assurance program that contains specific measures to reduce the possibility of diversion of controlled substances from legitimate treatment use and that assigns specific responsibility to the medical and administrative staff of the Opioid Treatment Program for carrying out the diversion control measures and functions described in the Diversion Control Plan.

5. As a result of the above conduct, Melissa L. Northwood, R.N., is subject to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 441.07(1)(b) and (d).

ORDER

1. The attached Stipulation is accepted.
2. Respondent Melissa L. Northwood, R.N., is REPRIMANDED.
3. The professional nursing license issued to Melissa L. Northwood, R.N., (license number 178558-30) and her privilege to practice in Wisconsin pursuant to the Nurse Licensure Compact, are LIMITED as follows:
 - a. Within ninety (90) days of the date of this Order, Respondent shall at her own expense, successfully complete six (6) hours of education on the course Medication Errors offered by a provider pre-approved by the Board's monitoring liaison, including taking and passing any exam offered for the courses.
 - b. Respondent shall submit proof of successful completion of the education in the form of verification from the institution providing the education to the Department Monitor at the address stated below. None of the education completed pursuant to this requirement may be used to satisfy any continuing education requirements that have been or may be instituted by the Board or Department, and also may not be used in future attempts to upgrade a credential in Wisconsin.
 - c. This limitation shall be removed from Respondent's license after satisfying the Board or its designee that Respondent has successfully completed all of the ordered education.
4. Within 120 days from the date of this Order, Melissa L. Northwood, R.N., shall pay COSTS of this matter in the amount of \$200.00.
5. Request of approval of courses, proof of successful course completion and payment of costs (made payable to the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services) shall be sent by Respondent to the Department Monitor at the address below:

Department Monitor
Division of Legal Services and Compliance
Department of Safety and Professional Services

P.O. Box 7190, Madison, WI 53707-7190
Telephone (608) 267-3817; Fax (608) 266-2264
DSPSMonitoring@wisconsin.gov

6. Violation of any of the terms of this Order may be construed as conduct imperiling public health, safety and welfare and may result in a summary suspension of Respondent's license. The Board in its discretion may in the alternative impose additional conditions and limitations or other additional discipline for a violation of any of the terms of this Order. In the event Respondent fails to timely submit payment of the costs as ordered or fails to submit proof of successful completion of the ordered education as set forth above, Respondent's license (no. 178558-30) may, in the discretion of the Board or its designee, be SUSPENDED, without further notice or hearing, until Respondent has complied with payment of costs and submit proof of completion of the education.

7. This Order is effective on the date of its signing.

WISCONSIN BOARD OF NURSING

by: Julia Nelson, RN
A Member of the Board

2/13/14
Date

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

MELISSA L. NORTHWOOD, R.N.,
RESPONDENT.

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STIPULATION

0003021

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 13 NUR 633

Respondent Melissa L. Northwood, R.N., and the Division of Legal Services and Compliance, Department of Safety and Professional Services stipulate as follows:

1. This Stipulation is entered into as a result of a pending investigation by the Division of Legal Services and Compliance. Respondent consents to the resolution of this investigation by Stipulation.

2. Respondent understands that by signing this Stipulation, Respondent voluntarily and knowingly waives the following rights:

- the right to a hearing on the allegations against Respondent, at which time the State has the burden of proving those allegations by a preponderance of the evidence;
- the right to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against Respondent;
- the right to call witnesses on Respondent's behalf and to compel their attendance by subpoena;
- the right to testify on Respondent's own behalf;
- the right to file objections to any proposed decision and to present briefs or oral arguments to the officials who are to render the final decision;
- the right to petition for rehearing; and
- all other applicable rights afforded to Respondent under the United States Constitution, the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Administrative Code, and other provisions of state or federal law.

3. Respondent is aware of Respondent's right to seek legal representation and has been provided an opportunity to obtain legal counsel before signing this Stipulation.

4. Respondent agrees to the adoption of the attached Final Decision and Order by the Wisconsin Board of Nursing (Board). The parties to the Stipulation consent to the entry of the attached Final Decision and Order without further notice, pleading, appearance or consent of the parties. Respondent waives all rights to any appeal of the Board's order, if adopted in the form as attached.

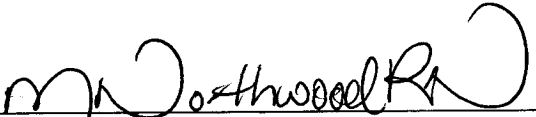
5. If the terms of this Stipulation are not acceptable to the Board, the parties shall not be bound by the contents of this Stipulation, and the matter shall then be returned to the Division

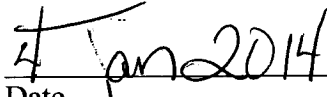
of Legal Services and Compliance for further proceedings. In the event that the Stipulation is not accepted by the Board, the parties agree not to contend that the Board has been prejudiced or biased in any manner by the consideration of this attempted resolution.


6. The parties to this Stipulation agree that the attorney or other agent for the Division of Legal Services and Compliance and any member of the Board ever assigned as an advisor in this investigation may appear before the Board in open or closed session, without the presence of Respondent, for purposes of speaking in support of this agreement and answering questions that any member of the Board may have in connection with deliberations on the Stipulation. Additionally, any such advisor may vote on whether the Board should accept this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.

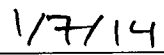
7. Respondent is informed that should the Board adopt this Stipulation, the Board's Final Decision and Order is a public record and will be published in accordance with standard Department procedure.

8. The Division of Legal Services and Compliance joins Respondent in recommending the Board adopt this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.


Melissa L. Northwood, R.N., Respondent
1825 East Ave. S.
La Crosse, WI 54601
License no. 178558-30


Date


Kim M. Kluck, Attorney
Division of Legal Services and Compliance
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935


Date