

## WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



### Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services Access to the Public Records of the Reports of Decisions

This Reports of Decisions document was retrieved from the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services website. These records are open to public view under Wisconsin's Open Records law, sections 19.31-19.39 Wisconsin Statutes.

#### Please read this agreement prior to viewing the Decision:

- The Reports of Decisions is designed to contain copies of all orders issued by credentialing authorities within the Department of Safety and Professional Services from November, 1998 to the present. In addition, many but not all orders for the time period between 1977 and November, 1998 are posted. Not all orders issued by a credentialing authority constitute a formal disciplinary action.
- Reports of Decisions contains information as it exists at a specific point in time in the Department of Safety and Professional Services data base. Because this data base changes constantly, the Department is not responsible for subsequent entries that update, correct or delete data. The Department is not responsible for notifying prior requesters of updates, modifications, corrections or deletions. All users have the responsibility to determine whether information obtained from this site is still accurate, current and complete.
- There may be discrepancies between the online copies and the original document. Original documents should be consulted as the definitive representation of the order's content. Copies of original orders may be obtained by mailing requests to the Department of Safety and Professional Services, PO Box 8935, Madison, WI 53708-8935. The Department charges copying fees. *All requests must cite the case number, the date of the order, and respondent's name* as it appears on the order.
- Reported decisions may have an appeal pending, and discipline may be stayed during the appeal. Information about the current status of a credential issued by the Department of Safety and Professional Services is shown on the Department's Web Site under "License Lookup."

The status of an appeal may be found on court access websites at:

<http://ccap.courts.state.wi.us/InternetCourtAccess> and <http://www.courts.state.wi.us/wscga>

- Records not open to public inspection by statute are not contained on this website.

**By viewing this document, you have read the above and agree to the use of the Reports of Decisions subject to the above terms, and that you understand the limitations of this on-line database.**

**Correcting information on the DSPS website:** An individual who believes that information on the website is inaccurate may contact [DSPS@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DSPS@wisconsin.gov)

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION OF THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY  
THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING, AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

---

IN THE MATTER OF THE LICENSE OF :  
PATRICIA A. UNSETH, A.P.S.W., S.A.C.-I.T., : FINAL DECISION AND ORDER  
LICENSEE. : FOR REMEDIAL EDUCATION  
: **ORDER 0007006**

---

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 18 SOC 036

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

Patricia A. Unseth, A.P.S.W., S.A.C.-I.T.  
Eagle River, WI 54521

Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional  
Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board  
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 Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board (Section). The Section has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Licensee Patricia A. Unseth, A.P.S.W., S.A.C.-I.T., (DOB xx/xx/1966) is credentialed in the state of Wisconsin to practice as an advanced practice social worker, having credential number 127596-121, first issued on March 31, 2009, and current through February 28, 2021.<sup>1</sup> Licensee's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) is located in Eagle River, Wisconsin.

---

<sup>1</sup> Licensee is also credentialed in the state of Wisconsin to practice as a substance abuse counselor-in-training, having credential number 19096-130, first issued on January 29, 2020, and current through February 28, 2021.

2. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Licensee was employed as a social worker for a county agency, located in Eagle River, Wisconsin.

3. The Department received a Complaint from Licensee's employer alleging Licensee searched confidential cases assigned to other social workers and her supervisor within the electronic Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (eWiSACWIS) without a valid work reason.

4. Licensee signed an eWiSACWIS User Agreement on July 14, 2015, acknowledging that Licensee "must have a valid, work-related reason to access or review any record or part of a record within eWiSACWIS."

5. In March 2017, Licensee's supervisor met with her to discuss her case search history and what did, or did not, constitute an inappropriate search in eWiSACWIS. One of the search methods that was identified as usually inappropriate was a search "by worker" (as opposed to "by case"). If a worker searched for a case "by worker", the system would open all that worker's cases and the case being searched may or may not be one of them. Licensee was instructed that the appropriate way to find out what social worker was assigned to a case was to search "by case", and the social worker would be listed within the case.

6. Licensee's employer conducted an audit of social workers' access of eWiSACWIS from January 1, 2016, through May 30, 2018. According to the audit, Licensee conducted a total of 2,331 searches, while her co-workers conducted a total of 1,161; 861; and 676 searches respectively. Licensee looked up other workers' cases on 585 separate occasions during the audit time frame.

7. The audit revealed that, after Licensee's supervisor advised in March 2017 that a search "by worker" was usually inappropriate, Licensee continued to search "by worker" on 227 occasions. Licensee's co-workers searched "by worker" on zero, zero, and eight (8) occasions during that time frame, respectively.

8. The Department is not aware of any evidence that Respondent inappropriately shared information accessed in eWiSACWIS with others, or otherwise inappropriately utilized the information accessed in eWiSACWIS.

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

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board is authorized to enter into the attached Stipulation pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 227.44(5).

ORDER

1. The attached Stipulation is accepted.
2. Within six (6) months of the date of this Order, Licensee shall at her own expense take and successfully complete four (4) hours of education on the topic of client confidentiality as follows:
  - a. Each course attended in satisfaction of this Order must be pre-approved by the Section or its designee. Licensee shall be responsible for locating course(s) satisfactory to the Section and for obtaining the required approval of the courses from the Section or its designee. Licensee must take and pass any exam offered for the course(s).
  - b. Licensee 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.
  - c. The Section's monitoring liaison may change the number of credit hours and/or education topics in response to a request from Licensee. The monitoring liaison may consider the topic availability and/or hours of education when determining if a change to the ordered education should occur.
  - d. 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 Section or Department.
3. Request for approval of courses and proof of successful course completion shall be sent by Licensee 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](mailto:DSPSMonitoring@wisconsin.gov)

You may also submit this information online via DSPS' Monitoring Case Management System, here:

<https://dspsmonitoring.wi.gov>

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

SOCIAL WORKER SECTION OF THE WISCONSIN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY,  
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING, AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

by: Candace Coates L.P.  
A Member of the Section

9/15/2020  
Date

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION OF THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY  
THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING, AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

---

IN THE MATTER OF THE LICENSE OF :  
 :  
PATRICIA A. UNSETH, A.P.S.W., S.A.C.-I.T., : STIPULATION  
LICENSEE. :  
 : ORDER 0007006

---

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 18 SOC 036

Licensee Patricia A. Unseth, A.P.S.W., S.A.C.-I.T., 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. Licensee consents to the resolution of this investigation by Stipulation.

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

- the right to a hearing on the allegations against Licensee, 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 Licensee;
- the right to call witnesses on Licensee's behalf and to compel their attendance by subpoena;
- the right to testify on Licensee'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 Licensee under the United States Constitution, the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Administrative Code, and other provisions of state or federal law.

3. Licensee is aware of Licensee's right to seek legal representation and has been provided an opportunity to obtain legal counsel before signing this Stipulation. Licensee is represented by Attorney Timothy Hawks.

4. Licensee agrees to the adoption of the attached Final Decision and Order by the Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board (Section). 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. Licensee waives all rights to any appeal of the Section's order, if adopted in the form as attached.

5. If the terms of this Stipulation are not acceptable to the Section, 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 Section, the parties agree not to contend that the Section 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 Section ever assigned as an advisor in this investigation may appear before the Section in open or closed session, without the presence of Licensee or Licensee's attorney, for purposes of speaking in support of this agreement and answering questions that any member of the Section may have in connection with deliberations on the Stipulation. Additionally, any such advisor may vote on whether the Section should accept this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.

7. Licensee is informed that should the Section adopt this Stipulation, the Section'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 Licensee in recommending the Section adopt this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.

Patricia A. Unseth  
Patricia A. Unseth, A.P.S.W., S.A.C.-I.T., Licensee  
Eagle River, WI 54521  
Credential nos. 127596-121 and 19096-130

6/1/2020  
Date

Timothy Hawks  
Timothy Hawks, Attorney for Licensee  
Hawks Quindel, SC  
222 East Erie Street, Suite 210  
PO Box 442  
Milwaukee, WI 53201

6/1/2020  
Date

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

06/02/2020  
Date