

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	:	
	:	FINAL DECISION AND ORDER
SAMANTHA S. SCHMITTINGER, R.N.,	:	
RESPONDENT.	:	ORDER 0007030

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case Nos. 18 NUR 298 and 18 NUR 498

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

Samantha S. Schmittinger, R.N.
Okauchee, WI 53069

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 agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final disposition of these matters, 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 these matters adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent Samantha S. Schmittinger (DOB xx-xx-1985) is licensed in the state of Wisconsin as a registered nurse, having license number 223541-30, first issued on June 18, 2015, and current through February 28, 2022. Respondent is licensed in the state of Wisconsin as practical nurse, having license number 315833-31, first granted on July 19, 2012. This license expired on April 30, 2017 and has not been renewed. Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 440.08(3), Respondent retains the right to renew upon payment of a fee until April 29, 2022.

2. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) is in Okauchee, Wisconsin 53069.

18 NUR 298

3. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Respondent worked as a private duty nurse for Patient A, a 35-year old ventilator-dependent male.

4. On May 8, 2018, Respondent was found unresponsive by nursing staff arriving at Patient A's home for a shift change. When Respondent woke up, she began to vomit and could not walk unassisted or speak in complete sentences.

5. Respondent left Patient A unattended and the oncoming nurse found he was in respiratory distress requiring five (5) liters of oxygen. Respondent also failed to administer prescribed medications, internal feedings, and respiratory treatments to Patient A.

6. Respondent was transported to the emergency room where she underwent a drug screen. Respondent tested positive for benzodiazepines and opiates. Respondent had a prescription for oxycodone (opiate) and clonazepam (benzodiazepine).

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7. On May 19, 2018, Respondent was arrested for driving while impaired after she almost struck multiple parked cars, two dumpsters, and a fire hydrant.

8. Respondent submitted to a blood test, the results of which were positive for carboxy-THC and clonazepam 79 ng/mL.

9. On October 18, 2019, Respondent was convicted in Waukesha County Circuit Court Case No. 2019CT000733 of one (1) count of Operating a Motor Vehicle While Intoxicated (2nd), a misdemeanor, in violation of Wis. Stats. §§ 346.63(1)(a).

10. On May 27, 2018, Respondent was arrested for driving while impaired.

11. Upon the police's search of Respondent's vehicle, a syringe with no needle was found in Respondent's glovebox. Respondent admitted the syringe was filled with Dilaudid for which she had no prescription.

12. Respondent submitted to a blood test, the results of which were positive for THC, methadone, and clonazepam (benzodiazepine). Respondent admits to having no prescription for methadone.

13. On January 2, 2020, Respondent pled guilty in Waukesha County Circuit Court Case No. 2018CF001118 to one (1) count of Possession of Narcotic Drugs, a felony, in violation of Wis. Stat. § 961.41(3g)(am). Respondent entered into a Deferred Prosecution Agreement.

14. On January 8, 2020, Respondent entered into a court-ordered monitoring and support program where she attends weekly meetings and is subject to observed drug screens. Respondent provided proof to the Department that the results from her August 31, 2020 drug screen were negative.

15. In resolution of these matters, Respondent consents to the entry of the following Conclusions of Law and Order.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Board has jurisdiction to act in these matters 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, Respondent violated Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(2), by violating or aiding and abetting a violation of any law substantially related to the practice of nursing.

3. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent violated Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(6)(c), by departing from or failing to conform to the minimal standards of acceptable nursing practice that may create unnecessary risk or danger to a patient's life, health, or safety.

4. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent violated Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(6)(e), by practicing nursing while under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or while impaired by the use of legitimately prescribed pharmacological agents or medications.

5. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent violated Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(6)(f), by being unable to practice safely by reason of alcohol or other substance use.

6. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent violated Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(8)(e), by obtaining, possessing or attempting to obtain or possess a drug without lawful authority.

7. As a result of the above conduct, Respondent is subject to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 441.07(1g)(b), (c) and (d).

ORDER

1. The attached Stipulation is accepted.

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

3. The registered nursing license issued to Respondent (license number 223541-30), and Respondent's right to renew her practical nursing license (license number 315833-31), are **SUSPENDED** as follows:

SUSPENSION

A.1. Respondent's license (license number 223541-30) to practice as a registered nurse in the state of Wisconsin is **SUSPENDED** for an indefinite period.

- A.2. Respondent's right to renew her license (license number 315833-31) to practice as a practical nurse in the state of Wisconsin is SUSPENDED for an indefinite period.
- A.3. The privilege of Respondent to practice as a nurse in the state of Wisconsin under the authority of another state's license pursuant to the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact is also SUSPENDED for an indefinite period.

STAY OF SUSPENSION

- B.1. The suspension is hereby stayed.
- B.2. The Board or its designee may, without hearing, remove the stay upon receipt of information that Respondent is in violation of any provision of this Order. The Board or its designee may, in conjunction with any removal of any stay, prohibit the Respondent for a specified period of time from seeking a reinstatement of the stay under paragraph B.4.
- B.3. This suspension becomes reinstated immediately upon notice of the removal of the stay being provided to Respondent either by:
 - (a) Mailing to Respondent's last-known address provided to the Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 440.11; or
 - (b) Actual notice to Respondent or Respondent's attorney.
- B.4. The Board or its designee may reinstate the stay, if provided with sufficient information that Respondent is in compliance with the Order and that it is appropriate for the stay to be reinstated. Whether to reinstate the stay shall be wholly in the discretion of the Board or its designee.

CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Treatment Required

- C.1. Within thirty (30) days from the date of the Order, Respondent shall enter into, and shall continue, drug and alcohol treatment with a treater acceptable to the Board or its designee (Treater). Respondent shall participate in, cooperate with, and follow all treatment recommended by Treater.
- C.2. Respondent shall immediately provide Treater with a copy of this Final Decision and Order and all other subsequent orders.
- C.3. Treater shall be responsible for coordinating Respondent's rehabilitation and treatment as required under the terms of this Order, and shall immediately report any relapse, violation of any of the terms and conditions of this Order, and any suspected unprofessional conduct, to the Department Monitor (See D.1., below). If Treater is unable or unwilling to serve as required by this Order, Respondent shall immediately seek approval of a successor Treater by the Board or its designee.

- C.4. The rehabilitation program shall include individual and/or group therapy sessions at a frequency to be determined by Treater. Therapy may end only with the approval of the Board or its designee, after receiving a petition for modification as required by D.5., below.
- C.5. Treater shall submit formal written reports to the Department Monitor on a quarterly basis, as directed by the Department Monitor. These reports shall assess Respondent's progress in drug and alcohol treatment.

Releases

- C.6. Respondent shall provide and keep on file with Treater, all treatment facilities and personnel, laboratories and collection sites, current releases complying with state and federal laws. The releases shall allow the Board, its designee, and any employee of the Department to: (a) obtain all specimen screen results and patient health care and treatment records and reports, and (b) discuss the progress of Respondent's treatment and rehabilitation with Treater, treatment facilities and personnel, laboratories and collection sites. Copies of these releases shall immediately be filed with the Department Monitor.

AA/NA Meetings

- C.7. Respondent shall attend Narcotics Anonymous and/or Alcoholics Anonymous meetings or an approved equivalent program for recovering professionals, at the frequency recommended by Treater, but no less than twice per week. Attendance of Respondent at such meetings shall be verified by the speaker or chair and reported quarterly to Treater and the Department Monitor.

Sobriety

- C.8. Respondent shall abstain from all personal use of alcohol.
- C.9. Respondent shall abstain from all personal use of controlled substances as defined in Wis. Stat. § 961.01(4), except when prescribed, dispensed or administered by a practitioner for a legitimate medical condition. Respondent shall disclose Respondent's drug and alcohol history and the existence and nature of this Order to the practitioner prior to the practitioner prescribing the controlled substance. Respondent shall, at the time the controlled substance is prescribed, immediately sign a release in compliance with state and federal laws authorizing the practitioner to discuss Respondent's treatment with, and provide copies of treatment records to, Treater and the Board or its designee. Copies of these releases shall immediately be filed with the Department Monitor. Respondent shall disclose the name and address of such practitioner to the Department Monitor within five (5) business days of receipt of a prescription for controlled substances.
- C.10. Respondent shall provide the Department Monitor with a list of over-the-counter medications and drugs that they may take from time to time. Respondent shall abstain from all use of over-the-counter medications, products, or other substances (including but

not limited to natural substances, such as poppy seeds or any products containing alcohol) which may mask consumption of controlled substances or alcohol, create false positive screening results, or otherwise interfere with Respondent's test results, treatment or rehabilitation, unless ordered by a physician and approved by Treater, in which case the drug must be reported as described in paragraph C.11. It is Respondent's responsibility to educate herself about the medications and substances which may violate this paragraph, and to avoid those medications and substances.

- C.11. Respondent shall report to Treater and the Department Monitor all prescription medications and drugs taken by Respondent. Reports must be received within twenty-four (24) hours of administration, fill, or refill of the medication or drug, and shall identify the person or persons who prescribed, dispensed, administered, or ordered said medications or drugs. Each time the prescription is filled or refilled, Respondent shall immediately arrange for the prescriber or pharmacy to fax and mail copies of the prescription to the Department Monitor.

Drug and Alcohol Screens

- C.12. Within thirty (30) days from the date of the Order, Respondent shall enroll and begin participation in a drug and alcohol monitoring program which is approved by the Department (Approved Program).
- C.13. At the time Respondent enrolls in the Approved Program, Respondent shall review all rules and procedures made available by the Approved Program. Failure to comply with all requirements for participation in drug and alcohol monitoring established by the Approved Program is a violation of this Order. The requirements shall include:
- (a) Contact with the Approved Program as directed on a daily basis, including vacations, weekends, and holidays.
 - (b) Production of a urine, blood, sweat, nail, hair, saliva, or other specimen at a collection site designated by the Approved Program within five (5) hours of notification of a test.
- C.14. The Approved Program shall require the testing of specimens at a frequency of not less than forty-nine (49) times per year (one of which must be a hair test), for at least the first year of this Order. Thereafter the board may adjust the frequency of testing on its own initiative at any time, and/or Respondent may petition for modification of testing frequency per paragraph D.5.
- C.15. If any urine, blood, sweat, nail, hair, saliva, or other specimen is positive or suspected positive for any controlled substances or alcohol, Respondent shall promptly submit to additional tests or examinations, as the Board or its designee shall determine to be appropriate, to clarify or confirm the positive or suspected positive test results.
- C.16. In addition to any requirement of the Approved Program, the Board or its designee may require Respondent to do any or all of the following: (a) submit additional specimens; (b)

furnish any specimen in a directly witnessed manner; or (c) submit specimens on a more frequent basis.

- C.17. All confirmed positive test results shall be presumed valid. Respondent must prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, an error in collection, testing, fault in the chain of custody, or other valid defense.
- C.18. The Approved Program shall submit information and reports to the Department Monitor as directed.

Practice Limitations

- C.19. Respondent shall not work as a nurse or other health care provider in a setting in which Respondent has access to controlled substances.
- C.20. Respondent shall practice only under the direct supervision of a licensed nurse or other licensed health care professional, approved by the Board or its designee, who has received a copy of this Order.
- C.21. Respondent shall practice only in a work setting pre-approved by the Board or its designee. Requests for pre-approval must be accompanied by a current job description, name and contact information of the direct supervisor, and written acknowledgment from the employer that a copy of this Order has been received and that the restrictions will be accommodated.
- C.22. Respondent may not work in a home health care, hospice, pool nursing, assisted living, agency, or as a nurse in a correctional setting.
- C.23. Prior to commencing practice, Respondent shall provide a copy of this Order, and all other subsequent orders, immediately to supervisory personnel at all settings where Respondent works as a nurse or care giver or provides health care, currently or in the future.
- C.24. It is Respondent's responsibility to arrange for quarterly written reports to be submitted to the Department Monitor from his or her supervisor at each setting in which Respondent practiced nursing in the previous quarter. These reports shall be submitted as directed by the Department Monitor, and shall assess Respondent's work performance, and shall include the number of hours of active nursing practice worked during that quarter. If a report indicates poor performance, the Board may institute appropriate corrective limitations, or may revoke a stay of the suspension, in its discretion.
- C.25. Respondent shall report to the Board any change of employment status, residence, address, or telephone number within five (5) days of the date of a change. This report shall not be considered formal change of address notification pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 440.11.

MISCELLANEOUS Department Monitor

- D.1. Any requests, petitions, reports, and other information required by this Order shall be mailed, e-mailed, faxed, or delivered to:

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

Respondent may also submit this information online via DSPS' Monitoring Case Management System, here:
<https://dpsmonitoring.wi.gov>

Required Reporting by Respondent

- D.2. Respondent is responsible for compliance with all terms and conditions of this Order, including the timely submission of reports by others. Respondent shall promptly notify the Department Monitor of any failures of the Treater, treatment facility, Approved Program, or collection sites to conform to the terms and conditions of this Order. Respondent shall promptly notify the Department Monitor of any violations of any of the terms and conditions of this Order by Respondent.
- D.3. Respondent shall submit self-reports to the Department Monitor on a quarterly basis, as directed by the Department Monitor. The reports shall include a summary of Respondent's compliance with the terms and conditions of the Order in the previous quarter, Respondent's current address, and home telephone number. The self-report shall not be considered formal change of address notification pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 440.11.

Change of Treater or Approved Program by Board

- D.4. If the Board, or its designee, determines the Treater or Approved Program has performed inadequately or has failed to satisfy the terms and conditions of this Order, the Board, or its designee, may direct that Respondent continue treatment and rehabilitation under the direction of another Treater or Approved Program.

Petitions for Modification of Limitations or Termination of Order

- D.5. Respondent may petition the Board on an annual basis for modification of the terms of this Order; however, no such petition for modification shall occur earlier than one (1) year from the date of the initial stay of the suspension. Any petition for modification shall be accompanied by a written recommendation from Respondent's Treater expressly supporting the specific modifications sought. Denial of a petition in whole or in part shall not be considered a denial of a license within the meaning of Wis. Stat. § 227.01(3)(a), and Respondent shall not have a right to any further hearings or proceedings on the denial.

- D.6. Respondent may petition the Board for termination of this Order after demonstrating five (5) years of successful compliance with all terms, including at least 600 hours of approved nursing practice each year. The Board may, on its own motion, grant full Wisconsin licensure at any time.

Costs of Compliance

- D.7. Respondent shall be responsible for all costs and expenses incurred in conjunction with the monitoring, screening, supervision, and any other expenses associated with compliance with the terms of this Order. Being dropped from a program for non-payment is a violation of this Order.

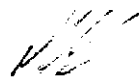
Costs of Proceeding

- D.8. Respondent shall pay costs of \$1,550.00 to the Department, within 120 days of this Order. Payment may be made online at <https://dspsmonitoring.wi.gov> , or mailed to the attention of the Department Monitor at the address in paragraph D.1., above.

Additional Discipline

- D.9. In addition to any other action authorized by this Order or law, the Board, in its discretion, may impose additional limitations or pursue separate disciplinary action for violation of any term of this Order.

WISCONSIN BOARD OF NURSING

By:  _____
A Member of the Board

10/8/2020
Date

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

SAMANTHA S. SCHMITTINGER, R.N.,
RESPONDENT.

:
:
:
:
:

STIPULATION

ORDER 0007030

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case Nos. 18 NUR 298 and 18 NUR 498

Respondent Samantha S. Schmittinger, 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 two (2) pending investigations by the Division of Legal Services and Compliance. Respondent consents to the resolution of these investigations 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.

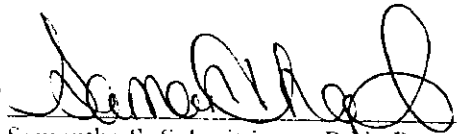
5. If the terms of this Stipulation are not acceptable to the Board, the parties shall not be bound by the contents of this Stipulation, and the matter shall then be returned to the Division

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 these investigations 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.


Samantha S. Schmittinger, R.N., Respondent
Okauchee, WI 53069
License No. 223541-30

9/28/2020
Date


Julie A. Zimmer, Prosecuting Attorney
Department of Safety and Professional Services
Division of Legal Services and Compliance
P.O. Box 7190
Madison WI 53707-7190

09/28/2020
Date