

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

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

BRUCE D. FREEMAN, R.N., A.P.N.P.,
RESPONDENT.

:
:
: FINAL DECISION AND ORDER
:
: **ORDER 0007706**

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 18 NUR 015

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

Bruce D. Freeman, R.N., A.P.N.P.
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

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 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 Bruce D. Freeman, R.N., A.P.N.P., (Year of Birth 1955) is licensed in the state of Wisconsin as a registered nurse with multistate privileges pursuant to the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (Compact), having license number 94441-30, first issued on August 22, 1986, and current through February 28, 2022. Respondent is also certified as an advanced practice nurse prescriber, having certificate number 3236-33, first issued on September 21, 2007, and current through September 30, 2022.

2. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) is in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin 54935.

3. On September 14, 2017, the Board issued an administrative warning to Respondent for telling an off-color joke to a female client in January 2016.

4. On January 17, 2018, the Board received a report from the National Practitioner Data Bank of a medical malpractice settlement paid on behalf of Respondent to Patient A, a former female patient of Respondent born in 1963, who alleged that Respondent engaged in a sexual relationship with her. The Department's Division of Legal Services and Compliance opened this case to investigate the allegations.

5. In 2014, Respondent practiced as a psychiatric nurse practitioner and provided mental health treatment to Patient A.

6. Respondent began a personal relationship with Patient A while she was under his care. Respondent admits that he engaged in inappropriate behavior with Patient A that included consensual hugging, romantic kissing, and sharing personal elements of his life.

7. Respondent also sent Patient A sexually explicit emails while she was under his care. Respondent denies engaging in sexual intercourse with Patient A.

8. Patient A ended treatment with Respondent in December 2014 but kept in contact with him until 2017.

9. Respondent is currently practicing nursing under the supervision of a licensed psychiatrist and sees patients remotely only.

10. Respondent is currently undergoing psychotherapy at the Veteran's Administration. Respondent voluntarily underwent a fitness-to-practice assessment from a licensed psychiatrist, which found Respondent fit to practice and recommended that Respondent continue his psychotherapy.

11. Respondent submitted proof of completion of the following relevant continuing education courses provided by Relias, which is accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center:

a) November 13, 2020: *Building Healthy Therapeutic Relationships*, 2.25 hours.

b) November 15, 2020: *Ethical Decision-Making*, 1.25 hours.

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

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Board 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, Respondent violated principles of professional boundaries, including failing to establish, maintain, or communicate professional boundaries with the patient, within the meaning of Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(4)(e)1.a.

3. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent violated principles of professional boundaries, including engaging in a relationship with a patient that could impair the nurse's professional judgment, within the meaning of Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(4)(e)1.b.

4. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent violated principles of professional boundaries, including exploiting in any manner the professional relationship with a patient for the nurse's emotional, financial, sexual, or personal advantage or benefit, within the meaning of Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(4)(e)1.c.

5. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent violated principles of professional boundaries, including engaging in any dual relationship in mental health nursing, within the meaning of Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(4)(e)1.e.

6. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent engaged in sexual misconduct, including sexually explicit conduct, sexual contact, exposure, gratification, other sexual behavior with or in the presence of a patient, within the meaning of Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(4)(f)1.a.

7. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Respondent engaged in sexual misconduct, including conduct that may reasonably be interpreted by a patient as sexual or any verbal behavior that is sexually harassing to a patient, within the meaning of Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(4)(f)1.b.

8. As a result of the above conduct, Respondent is subject to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 441.07(1g)(b) and (d), and Wis. Admin. Code Ch. N 7.03.

ORDER

1. The attached Stipulation is accepted.

2. Respondent's license to practice as a registered nurse and Respondent's certificate to practice as an advanced practice nurse prescriber in the state of Wisconsin (license number 94441-30 and certificate number 3236-33), and Respondent's privilege to practice pursuant to the Compact, are SUSPENDED for ninety (90) days from the date of this Order.

3. Respondent's license to practice as a registered nurse and Respondent's certificate to practice as an advanced practice nurse prescriber in the state of Wisconsin (license number 94441-30 and certificate number 3236-33), and Respondent's privilege to practice pursuant to the Compact, are LIMITED as follows:

- a. Within ninety (90) days of the date of this Order, Respondent shall at his own expense, successfully complete four (4) hours of education on the topic of professional boundaries offered by a provider pre-approved by the Board's monitoring liaison, including taking and passing any exam offered for the courses.

- b. The Board's monitoring liaison may change the number of credit hours and/or education topics in response to a request from Respondent. The monitoring liaison may consider the topic availability and/or hours of education when determining if a change to the ordered education should occur.
 - c. 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.
 - d. In addition, the Board recognizes and accepts the successful completion of the above-described 3.5 credit hours of continuing education as the equivalent it would have otherwise ordered.
 - e. 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.
 - f. This limitation shall be removed from Respondent's license after satisfying the Board or its designee that Respondent has successfully completed all the ordered education.
4. Respondent's license to practice as a registered nurse and Respondent's certificate to practice as an advanced practice nurse prescriber in the state of Wisconsin (license number 94441-30 and certificate number 3236-33), and Respondent's privilege to practice pursuant to the Compact, are FURTHER LIMITED as follows:
- a. Respondent shall continue his psychotherapy at the Veteran's Administration, or with another treater acceptable to the Board or its designee.
 - b. Respondent shall immediately provide this Final Decision and Order to his psychotherapist or treater.
 - c. Respondent shall arrange for his psychotherapist or treater to submit quarterly written reports to the Department Monitor assessing Respondent's progress and fitness to practice nursing.
 - d. Respondent's psychotherapist or treater shall report immediately to the Department Monitor any violation or suspected violation of this Order.
 - e. When Respondent's psychotherapist or treater agrees Respondent no longer needs psychotherapy and is fit to practice nursing without it, Respondent may petition the Board for the termination of this limitation. The Board may grant or deny the petition in its discretion or may modify this Order as it sees fit.
5. Respondent's license to practice as a registered nurse and Respondent's certificate to practice as an advanced practice nurse prescriber in the state of Wisconsin (license number

94441-30 and certificate number 3236-33), and Respondent's privilege to practice pursuant to the Compact, are FURTHER LIMITED as follows:

- a. Respondent shall provide his nursing employer with a copy of this Order before engaging in any nursing employment. Respondent shall provide the Department Monitor with written acknowledgment from each nursing employer that a copy of this Order has been received. Such acknowledgment shall be provided to the Department Monitor within fourteen (14) days of beginning new employment and/or within fourteen (14) days of the date of this Order for employment current as of the date of this Order.
 - b. For a period of one (1) year from the date of this Order, Respondent shall arrange for his nursing employer(s) to send to the Department Monitor quarterly reports, reporting the terms and conditions of Respondent's employment and evaluating his work performance.
6. Within ninety (90) days from the date of this Order, Respondent shall pay COSTS of this matter in the amount of \$2,023.00.
7. Any requests, petitions, payments of costs (made payable to Department of Safety and Professional Services), and other information required by this Order shall be submitted 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) 266-2112; Fax (608) 266-2264
DSPSMonitoring@wisconsin.gov

Respondent may also submit this information online at: <https://dpsmonitoring.wi.gov>.

8. Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 441.51(5)(b), Respondent's multistate licensure privilege to practice in all Compact states besides Wisconsin is deactivated during the pendency of this Order.

9. In the event Respondent violates any term of this Order, Respondent's license to practice as a registered nurse and Respondent's certificate to practice as an advanced practice nurse prescriber in the state of Wisconsin (license number 94441-30 and certificate number 3236-33), or Respondent's right to renew his license and certificate, may, in the discretion of the Board or its designee, be SUSPENDED, without further notice or hearing, until Respondent has complied with the terms of the Order. The Board may, in addition and/or in the alternative refer any violation of this Order to the Division of Legal Services and Compliance for further investigation and action.

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

WISCONSIN BOARD OF NURSING

By: Al Rohmeyer
A Member of the Board of Nursing

12/3/2021
Date

**DSFS Chief Legal Counsel,
Delegatee**

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

BRUCE D. FREEMAN, R.N., A.P.N.P.,
RESPONDENT.

:
:
:
:
:
:

STIPULATION

ORDER 0007706

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 18 NUR 015

Respondent Bruce D. Freeman, R.N., A.P.N.P., 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. Respondent is represented by Attorney Tami Reding-Brubaker.

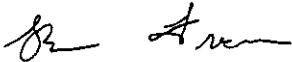
4. Respondent agrees to the adoption of the attached Final Decision and Order by the Wisconsin Board of Nursing (Board). The parties to the Stipulation consent to the entry of the attached Final Decision and Order without further notice, pleading, appearance or consent of the parties. Respondent waives 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 or Respondent's attorney, 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.

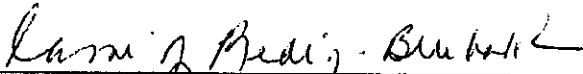
7. Respondent is informed that should the Board adopt this Stipulation, the Board's Final Decision and Order is a public record and will be published in accordance with standard Department procedure.

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.



Bruce D. Freeman, R.N., A.P.N.P., Respondent
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
License No. 94441-30
Certificate No. 3236-33

10/27/2021
Date



Tami Reding-Brubaker, Attorney for Respondent
Cassiday Schade LLP
1870 W. Winchester Road, Suite 148
Libertyville, IL 60048

10/27/2021
Date



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

10/27/2021
Date