# WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



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In the Matter of the Disciplinary Proceedings Against Angela Hamilton, L.P.N., Respondent.

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER ORDER 00080 12 Order No.

# Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 19 NUR 703

The State of Wisconsin, Board of Nursing, having considered the above-captioned matter and having reviewed the record and the Proposed Decision of the Administrative Law Judge, make the following:

#### <u>ORDER</u>

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered that the Proposed Decision annexed hereto, filed by the Administrative Law Judge, shall be and hereby is made and ordered the Final Decision of the State of Wisconsin, Board of Nursing.

The rights of a party aggrieved by this Decision to petition the department for rehearing and the petition for judicial review are set forth on the attached "Notice of Appeal Information."

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin on the 9th day of June , 2022.

anice A Member

Board of Nursing



# Before The State of Wisconsin DIVISION OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS

In the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Angela Hamilton, L.P.N., Respondent.

DHA Case No. SPS-22-0006 DLSC Case No. 19 NUR 703

# **PROPOSED DECISION AND ORDER**

The parties to this proceeding for purposes of Wis. Stat. §§ 227.47(1) and 227.53 are:

Angela Hamilton, L.P.N. 4062 W. 115<sup>th</sup> St., Apt. 109 Chicago, IL 60655

Angela Hamilton, L.P.N. 13042 Rose Landing Ave. Houston, TX 77070

Wisconsin Board of Nursing P.O. Box 8366 Madison, WI 53707-8366

Department of Safety and Professional Services, Division of Legal Services and Compliance, by:

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

#### PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Notice of Hearing and the Complaint in this matter were served on Respondent Angela Hamilton, L.P.N., by the Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department), Division of Legal Services and Compliance (Division), on January 25, 2022, to Respondent's most recent address on file with the Department, which is in Chicago, Illinois, by both certified and regular mail, consistent with Wis. Stat. § 440.11(2) and Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.08. A second copy was also mailed to Respondent's most recent address on file with the Texas Board of Nursing, which is in Houston, Texas. On January 27, 2022, Respondent signed a certified mail receipt, certifying that she received the documents at the address in Chicago, Illinois.

An Answer to a Complaint must be filed within 20 days from the date of service of the Complaint. Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.09(4). No Answer has been filed.

Following expiration of the 20-day period to file an Answer, the undersigned Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) scheduled a telephone prehearing conference for March 3, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. Notice of the prehearing conference was sent to both parties via regular mail consistent with Wis. Admin. Code § HA 1.03. The Notice was mailed to Respondent at her address on file with the Department, which is in Chicago, Illinois, as well as the address in Houston, Texas, as listed in the Division's Complaint and Notice of Hearing. The Notice instructed Respondent to contact the ALJ with a telephone number at which she could be reached for the conference no later than March 2, 2022. Respondent did not contact the ALJ.

At the prehearing conference held on March 3, 2022, Attorney Carley Peich Kiesling appeared on behalf of the Division. The ALJ attempted to reach Respondent at the telephone number on file with the Department. Respondent did not answer the telephone. The ALJ left a voicemail message instructing Respondent to call the ALJ by 10:40 a.m. or the prehearing conference would be conducted without her. Respondent did not return the ALJ's telephone call.

Based on Respondent's failure to file an Answer to the Complaint and failure to appear at the prehearing conference in this matter on March 3, 2022, the Division moved for default pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.14 and Wis. Admin. Code § HA 1.07(3)(c).

On March 4, 2022, the ALJ issued a Notice of Default and Order against Respondent and ordered that the Division file a recommended proposed decision and order no later than April 1, 2022. The Notice of Default and Order was sent to the parties via regular mail and email.

On the evening of March 4, 2022, the ALJ received a voicemail from Respondent stating that she received the Division of Hearings and Appeals' email containing the Notice of Default and Order and requesting that the ALJ return her call at (773) 619-9636. This is the same number at which the ALJ left a voicemail during the prehearing conference. On March 7, 2022, the ALJ responded to Respondent's voicemail via email, with a copy to the Division's attorney. The email explained that the ALJ was responding by email rather than telephone to avoid ex parte communications and asked Respondent whether she was requesting an opportunity to argue good cause for her failure to appear at the prehearing conference. Respondent did not respond to the ALJ's email.

On March 15, 2022, the ALJ sent another email to the parties stating that, based on Respondent's failure to respond to the March 7, 2022 email as well as her failure to clarify whether she is requesting an opportunity to show good cause for not appearing at the prehearing conference, she would not be relieved of the default finding. The Division was directed to file its recommendation as ordered. Respondent also did not respond to the March 15, 2022 email.

The Division timely filed its recommended proposed decision and order.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT

# Facts Related to the Alleged Violations

Findings of Fact 1-9 are taken from the Division's Complaint filed against Respondent in this matter.

1. Respondent Angela Hamilton, L.P.N., is not and has never been licensed as a nurse in the state of Wisconsin. Respondent is licensed as a practical nurse in the state of Texas, with multistate privileges pursuant to the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (Compact), having license number 327455, first issued on August 27, 2015, and current through February 28, 2023. Respondent is authorized to work in states that are members of the Compact, including Wisconsin.

2. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) is 4062 West 115<sup>th</sup> Street, Apt. 109, Chicago, Illinois 60655.

3. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Texas Board of Nursing is 13042 Rose Landing Avenue, Houston, Texas 77070.

4. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Respondent was working as a practical nurse at a nursing home in Lodi, Wisconsin (Facility).

5. On November 11, 2019, Respondent provided care to a female patient born in 1927 (Patient A).

6. Patient A had an order for Ativan to be given daily at bedtime, between 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

7. Two staff members at the Facility reported that Patient A was increasingly sleepy during supper at approximately 6:30 p.m.

8. Patient A's Ativan was signed out in the electronic medication administration record at 6:52 p.m. However, Respondent recorded in the narcotic book that Patient A's Ativan was checked out at 8:00 p.m.

9. After investigation, the Facility concluded that Respondent administered Patient A her bedtime dose of Ativan prior to the prescribed time.

#### Facts Related to Default

10. The Notice of Hearing and Complaint were served on Respondent at her address on file with the Department (in Chicago, Illinois) on January 25, 2022, by both certified and regular mail, pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.08 and Wis. Stat. § 440.11(2). A second copy was also mailed to Respondent's most recent address on file with the Texas Board of Nursing (in Houston, Texas). On January 27, 2022, Respondent signed a certified mail receipt, certifying that she received the documents at the address in Chicago, Illinois.

11. Respondent failed to file an Answer to the Complaint.

12. After the expiration of the 20-day time period to file an Answer, the ALJ scheduled a telephone prehearing conference for March 3, 2022. Notice of the prehearing conference was sent to both parties by regular mail. The Notice was mailed to Respondent at her address on file with the Department (in Chicago, Illinois), as well as the address in Houston, Texas, as listed in the Division's Complaint and Notice of Hearing. The Notice instructed Respondent to contact the ALJ with a telephone number at which she could be reached for the conference no later than March 2, 2022. The Notice also stated that if the Respondent failed to appear at the scheduled conference, default judgment may be entered against her.

13. Respondent did not contact the ALJ and did not provide a telephone number by March 2, 2022.

14. On March 3, 2022, Attorney Carley Peich Kiesling appeared on behalf of the Division for the prehearing conference. The ALJ attempted to reach Respondent at the telephone number on file with the Department. Respondent did not answer the telephone. The ALJ left a voicemail message instructing Respondent to call the ALJ by 10:40 a.m. or the prehearing conference would be conducted without her. Respondent did not return the ALJ's telephone call on March 3, 2022.

15. On March 3, 2022, the Division moved for default based on Respondent's failure to answer the Complaint and failure to appear for the prehearing conference pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code §§ SPS 2.14 and HA 1.07(3)(c).

16. On March 4, 2022, the ALJ issued a Notice of Default against Respondent and ordered that the Division file a recommended proposed decision and order no later than April 1, 2022. The Notice of Default was sent to both parties via regular mail and email.

17. On the evening of March 4, 2022, the ALJ received a voicemail from Respondent stating that she received the Division of Hearings and Appeals' email containing the Notice of Default and Order and requesting that the ALJ return her call at (773) 619-9636. This is the same number at which the ALJ left a voicemail during the prehearing conference.

18. On March 7, 2022, the ALJ responded to Respondent's voicemail via email, with a copy to the Division's attorney. The email explained that the ALJ was responding by email rather than telephone to avoid ex parte communications and asked Respondent whether she was requesting an opportunity to argue good cause for her failure to appear at the prehearing conference. Respondent did not respond to the ALJ's email.

19. On March 15, 2022, the ALJ sent another email to the parties stating that, based on Respondent's failure to respond to the March 7, 2022 email as well as her failure to clarify whether she is requesting an opportunity to show good cause for not appearing at the prehearing conference, she would not be relieved of the default finding. The Division was directed to file its recommendation as ordered. Respondent did not respond to the ALJ's email.

20. The Division timely filed its recommended proposed decision and order.

#### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Jurisdiction**

The Wisconsin Board of Nursing (Board) has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 441.07(1c). Wisconsin Stat. § 440.03(1) provides that the Department "may promulgate rules defining uniform procedures to be used by the department . . . and all examining boards and affiliated credentialing boards attached to the department or an examining board, for . . . conducting [disciplinary] hearings." These rules are codified in Wis. Admin. Code ch. SPS 2. Pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.10(2), the undersigned ALJ has authority to preside over this disciplinary proceeding in accordance with Wis. Stat. § 227.46(1).

Pursuant to the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact, a nurse practicing in a party state is subject to the jurisdiction of the licensing board and the practice laws of the party state. Wis. Stat. § 441.51(3)(e). The party state is authorized to take adverse action against a nurse's multistate privilege to practice in accordance with existing due process law and impose an encumbrance on the nurse's authority to practice within that party state. Wis. Stat. §§ 441.51(3)(d) and 441.51(5)(a)1.

### **Default**

The Division properly served the Notice and Complaint upon Respondent by mailing a copy to her address on file with the Department. Service by mail is complete upon mailing. Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.08(1). Under Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.14, if a respondent "fails to answer as required by s. SPS 2.09 or fails to appear at the hearing at the time fixed therefor, the respondent is in default and the disciplinary authority may make findings and enter an order on the basis of the complaint and other evidence." See also Wis. Admin. Code § HA 1.07(3)(c).

Here, Respondent violated Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.09(4) by failing to file an Answer to the Complaint within 20 days from the date of service. Respondent also failed to appear at the prehearing telephone conference on March 3, 2022. After the Notice of Default and Order was issued, Respondent called the ALJ requesting to discuss the case. However, when the ALJ emailed Respondent asking for more information, Respondent did not respond even though her voicemail confirmed that she was receiving the Division of Hearings and Appeals' emails. Therefore, Respondent is in default and has not shown good cause such that would justify relieving her of the default order. Findings and an order may be entered on the basis of the Complaint pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.14.

# Burden of Proof

The burden of proof in disciplinary proceedings before the Board is a preponderance of the evidence. See Wis. Stat. § 440.20(3). Given Respondent's failure to answer the allegations in the Complaint and default, the allegations in the Complaint are deemed admitted per Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.09(3).

#### **Violations**

On November 11, 2019, Respondent provided care to a female patient born in 1927 who had an order for Ativan to be administered between 8:00 and 9:00 p.m. daily. Two staff members noted that the patient was increasingly sleepy during supper at approximately 6:30 p.m. The patient's Ativan was signed out in the electronic medication administration record at 6:52 p.m.; however, Respondent recorded in the narcotic book that the patient's Ativan was checked out at 8:00 p.m. The Facility investigated and concluded that Respondent administered patient's bedtime dose of Ativan prior to the prescribed time.

By the conduct described above, Respondent erred in prescribing, dispensing, or administering medication within the meaning of Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(8)(d).

Because Respondent did not comply with Wis. Admin. Code § N 7.03(8)(d), Respondent is subject to adverse action against her multistate privilege to practice nursing in Wisconsin. Wis. Stat. §§ 441.51(3)(d) and (e), and Wis. Stat. § 441.51(5)(a)1. Authorized adverse action against Respondent's multistate privilege to practice in Wisconsin includes revocation, suspension, probation, or any other action that affects a nurse's authorization to practice under a multistate privilege pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 441.51(3)(d).

# **Discipline**

The three purposes of discipline in a professional misconduct case are: (1) to promote the rehabilitation of the credential holder; (2) to protect the public from other instances of misconduct; and (3) to deter other credential holders from engaging in similar conduct. *State v. Aldrich*, 71 Wis. 2d 206, 209, 237 N.W.2d 689 (1976).

The Compact provides the Board with authority to take adverse action against Respondent's ability to practice in Wisconsin via a multistate privilege. The Compact does not allow the Board to take action against Respondent's home state license. The Division recommends that Respondent's privilege to practice in Wisconsin be suspended until Respondent successfully completes three hours of education on the topic of medication administration, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Order below. The recommended discipline is consistent with the purposes articulated in *Aldrich*, is necessary to protect the public, and will deter other nurses who are practicing in Wisconsin via a multistate privilege from engaging in similar conduct.

The recommended discipline protects the public from other potential instances of misconduct. "Protection of the public is the purpose of requiring a license." State ex rel. Green v. Clark, 235 Wis. 628, 631, 294 N.W. 25 (1940). When a license, and by extension a privilege to practice, is granted to an individual, the Board is assuring the public that the individual is competent in his or her profession. Stringez v. Dep't of Regulation & Licensing Dentistry Examining Bd., 103 Wis. 2d 281, 287, 307 N.W.2d 664 (1981). Suspending Respondent until Respondent completes three (3) hours of education will remind her of her duty to abide by the Board's rules of professional conduct and indicate to Respondent that her actions have serious consequences for her privilege to practice nursing in Wisconsin. Requiring Respondent to

complete education on the topic of medication administration further protects the public by ensuring that Respondent understands the importance of properly administering medication.

The recommended discipline will also deter other nurses from engaging in similar conduct. Respondent has not acted in the best interest of her patients and disregarded the Board's authority as well as the law in place to protect public health and welfare. Nurses practicing in Wisconsin pursuant to a multistate privilege should be expected to understand the authority of the Board, and their responsibility to comply with Wisconsin law. Since the Board has no jurisdiction over Respondent's home state nursing license, suspending her Wisconsin practice privilege until she completes remedial education is the only effective means for this state to address misconduct that occurred here. Licensees with multistate privileges need to know that misconduct will not be tolerated by remote party states.

Lastly, promoting rehabilitation is a third purpose of discipline. Respondent's conduct reflects a need for education and training to emphasize the importance of accuracy in medication administration when caring for patients.

The recommended discipline is consistent with Board precedent. While most Board precedent deals with nurses licensed in Wisconsin, the Board has suspended and revoked a nurse's privilege to practice in Wisconsin when that nurse has violated Wis. Stat. ch. 441 and applicable code. See In the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Charity G. Clawson, R.N., Order No. 0007257 (March 11, 2021) (Montana nurse's privilege to practice in Wisconsin indefinitely suspended)<sup>1</sup>; See In the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Joan W. Cumings, R.N., Order No. 0002528 (July 11, 2013) (Texas nurse's privilege to practice in Wisconsin revoked)<sup>2</sup>; and See In the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Krystal A. Bauer, R.N., Order No. LS 0806054 (June 5, 2008) (Iowa nurse's privilege to practice in Wisconsin revoked)<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, the Board has recognized that when a nurse fails to respond to the Department and Board and fails to participate in the hearing proceedings, a suspension pending a response from the nurse is appropriate. See In the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Ernest W. Colburn, R.N., Order No. 0007712 (December 3, 2021) (Nurse failed to respond to Department and Board and failed to participate in hearing proceedings; license to practice nursing reinstated on January 19, 2022, following nurse's contact with the Board)<sup>4</sup>.

Finally, requiring three hours of education in response to Respondent's medication administration errors is appropriate based on Board precedent. See in the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Maureen E. Burke, L.P.N., Order No. 0007506 (August 12, 2021)<sup>5</sup>; See in the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Allison K. Hansen, L.P.N., Order No. 0007299 (April 8, 2021)<sup>6</sup>; See in the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Jeffrey W. Rover, L.P.N.,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://online.drl.wi.gov/decisions/2021/ORDER0007257-00017513.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://online.drl.wi.gov/decisions/2013/ORDER0002528-00008634.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See attached. Order not available on Department website.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://online.drl.wi.gov/decisions/2021/ORDER0007712-00018435.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> https://online.drl.wi.gov/decisions/2021/ORDER0007506-00017987.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> https://online.drl.wi.gov/decisions/2021/ORDER0007299-00017597.pdf

Order No. 0007161 (January 14, 2021)<sup>7</sup>; See In the Matter of the License of Yvonne K. Lutzke, L.P.N., Order No. 0005839 (August 9, 2018)<sup>8</sup>; and See In the Matter of the License of Gina T. Kent, R.N., A.P.N.P., Order No. 0005747 (May 10, 2018)<sup>9</sup>. (Education ordered for nurses who committed medication administration and documentation errors).

Based upon the facts of this case and the factors set forth in *Aldrich*, and prior Board decisions, suspending Respondent until Respondent completes three hours of education on medication administration, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Order below, is reasonable and warranted.

#### <u>Costs</u>

The Division requests that Respondent be ordered to pay the full costs of the investigation and of these proceedings. Under the Compact, a licensing board has the authority to recover the costs of investigations and disposition of cases resulting from any adverse action taken against a nurse practicing under a multistate license privilege if collection of such costs is otherwise permitted by state law. Wis. Stat. § 441.51(5)(a)6. Costs related to the investigation and disposition of this case are therefore recoverable from Respondent pursuant to Wis. Stat. §§ 441.51(5)(a)6. and 440.22.

The Board is vested with discretion concerning whether to assess all or part of the costs of this proceeding. See Wis. Stat. § 440.22(2). In exercising such discretion, the Board must look at aggravating and mitigating facts of the case; it may not assess costs against a licensee based solely on a "rigid rule or invocation of an omnipresent policy," such as preventing those costs from being passed on to others. Noesen v. State Department of Regulation & Licensing, Pharmacy Examining Board, 2008 WI App 52, ¶¶ 30-32, 311 Wis. 2d. 237, 751 N.W.2d 385. In previous orders, Boards have considered the following factors when determining if all or part of the costs should be assessed against the Respondent: (1) the number of counts charged, contested and proven; (2) the nature and seriousness of the misconduct; (3) the level of discipline sought by the prosecutor; (4) the Respondent's cooperation with the disciplinary process; (5) prior discipline, if any; (6) the fact that the Department is a program revenue agency, funded by other licensees; and (7) any other relevant circumstances. See In the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Elizabeth Buenzli-Fritz, LS0802183CHI (Aug. 14, 2008). It is within the Board's discretion as to which of these factors to consider, whether other factors should be considered, and how much weight to give any factors considered.

Considering the above factors, it is appropriate for Respondent to pay the full costs of the investigation and prosecution of these proceedings. Respondent defaulted and the factual allegations identified in this decision were deemed admitted. Respondent's conduct was serious and constitutes a danger to the health and welfare of the public. Furthermore, Respondent did not cooperate with the disciplinary process, failed to provide current contact information to the ALJ, failed to appear at the prehearing conference, and failed to file an Answer to the Complaint or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> https://online.drl.wi.gov/decisions/2021/ORDER0007161-00017335.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> https://online.drl.wi.gov/decisions/2018/ORDER0005839-00014823.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> https://online.drl.wi.gov/decisions/2018/ORDER0005747-00014635.pdf

otherwise provide any argument regarding the allegations. Such conduct demonstrates an unacceptable level of disregard for the authority of the Board. Finally, the Department is a program revenue agency whose operating costs are funded by the revenue received from credential holders. It would be unfair to impose the costs of pursuing discipline in this proceeding on those licensees who have not engaged in misconduct.

For the above reasons, it is appropriate for Respondent to pay the full costs of the investigation and prosecution in this matter, as determined pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code § SPS 2.18.

# <u>ORDER</u>

1. For the reasons set forth above, IT IS ORDERED that Respondent's multistate privilege to practice nursing in Wisconsin pursuant to licensure in Texas (Texas license no. 327455), or pursuant to licensure in any other Compact state, is SUSPENDED.

2. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that reinstatement of Respondent's multistate privilege to practice nursing in Wisconsin pursuant to licensure in Texas (license no. 327455), or pursuant to licensure in any other Compact state, is subject to the following:

- a. Respondent shall, at her own expense, successfully complete three (3) hours of education on the topic of medication administration offered by a provider preapproved 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 obtain a credential in Wisconsin.
- c. 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.

3. Respondent shall pay all recoverable costs in this matter in an amount to be established pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code. § SPS 2.18.

4. Upon completion of the education required by this Order, and upon payment of the costs required by this Order, the suspension of Respondent's privilege to practice in Wisconsin pursuant to the Compact is terminated.

5. The terms of the Order are effective the date the Final Decision and Order in this matter is signed by the Board.

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Dated at Milwaukee, Wisconsin on May 5, 2022.

STATE OF WISCONSIN DIVISION OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS 4822 Madison Yards Way, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor North Madison, Wisconsin 53705-5400 Tel. (414) 227-4027 FAX: (608) 264-9885 Email: andrea.brauer@wisconsin.gov

By: Undrea mer

Andrea Brauer Administrative Law Judge