

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
THREE CAPITOL HILL
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02908

In the Matter of:	:	
	:	
	:	Case No.: C23-01228
Christina Scanlon,	:	Board of Nursing Assistants
Respondent.	:	
	:	

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

This matter arose pursuant to a Notice of Hearing and Specification of Charges (“Notice”) issued to Christina Scanlon (“Respondent”) by the Department of Health (“Department”) on March 25, 2024. The Respondent holds a registration as a nursing assistant pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.9-1 *et seq.* that was suspended by a Summary Suspension dated December 27, 2023. Department’s Exhibit One (1). A hearing was scheduled for April 29, 2024, at which time the Respondent did not appear. Pursuant to Section 4.6.1 of 216-RICR-10-05-4 *Practices and Procedures Before the Rhode Island Department of Health* Regulation (“Hearing Regulation”), service may be made by hand-delivery or first class mail and service is complete upon mailing, even if unclaimed or returned, when sent to the last known address of the party. In this matter, the Respondent was sent notice by regular and certified mail and email.¹ Since the Respondent was adequately noticed of hearing, a hearing was held before the undersigned on April 29, 2024.² Additionally, Section 4.13.2 of the Hearing Regulation provides that a judgment may be entered

¹ The Notice was sent to the Respondent’s address and email address on record with the Department. Department’s Exhibits Two (2) (Notice indicating mailing by email and regular and certified mail to email address and mailing address on record with the Department); Three (3) (United States Post Office website tracking showing the Notice sent by certified mail was available for pick up); and Four (4) (Respondent’s licensing information on record with the Department with mailing and email addresses used to send Notice).

² Pursuant to a delegation of authority by the Director of the Department of Health.

based on pleadings and/or evidence submitted at hearing by a non-defaulting party. The Department was represented by counsel who rested on the record.

II. JURISDICTION

The administrative hearing was held pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-18-1 *et seq.*, R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.9-1 *et seq.*, R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-35-1 *et seq.*, and the Hearing Regulation.

III. ISSUE

Whether the Respondent violated R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.9-8 and 216-RICR-40-05-22 *Nursing Assistants, Medication Aides, and the Approval of Nursing Assistant and Medication Aide Training Programs* (“Licensing Regulation”) and if so, what is the appropriate sanction.

IV. MATERIAL FACTS

Based on the pleadings and the exhibits, the Respondent was employed by a staffing agency and assigned to a patient over 65 years of age at the patient’s home. The Respondent began working for the patient on February 14, 2023 and over the course of six (6) months stole approximately \$25,000 in total from the patient by withdrawing money from the patient’s bank account using the patient’s bank debit card. The Respondent was caught on video several times making said unauthorized withdrawals. On or about January 10, 2024, the Respondent was charged with fraudulent use of credit card, embezzlement and fraudulent conversion, exploitation of an elder, and Medicaid fraud (as was paid by Medicaid funds for caring for the patient). Department’s Exhibits One (1); Two (2) Five (5) (complaint from staffing agency dated December 8, 2023); Six (6) (Pawtucket police incident report dated December 8, 2023); Seven (7) (Pawtucket police arrest report dated December 15, 2023); Eight (8) (court docket); and Nine (9) (criminal information complaint filed in Providence Superior Court and dated March 25, 2024 and which includes the charges against Respondent and copies of patient’s bank records).

V. DISCUSSION

A. **Legislative Intent**

The Rhode Island Supreme Court has consistently held that it effectuates legislative intent by examining a statute in its entirety and giving words their plain and ordinary meaning. *In re Falstaff Brewing Corp.*, 637 A.2d 1047 (R.I. 1994). If a statute is clear and unambiguous, “the Court must interpret the statute and must give the words of the statute their plain and ordinary meanings.” *Oliveira v. Lombardi*, 794 A.2s 453, 457 (R.I. 2002) (citation omitted). The Supreme Court has also established that it will not interpret legislative enactments in a manner that renders them nugatory or that would produce an unreasonable result. See *Defenders of Animals v. DEM*, 553 A.2s 541 (R.I. 1989) (citation omitted).

B. **Standard of Review for an Administrative Hearing**

It is well settled that in formal or informal adjudications modeled on the Federal Administrative Procedures Act, the initial burdens of production and persuasion rest with the moving party. 2 Richard J. Pierce, *Administrative Law Treatise* § 10.7 (2002). Unless otherwise specified, a preponderance of the evidence is generally required in order to prevail. *Id.* See *Lyons v. Rhode Island Pub. Employees Council 94*, 559 A.2d 130m 34 (R.I. 1989) (preponderance standard is the “normal” standard in civil cases). This means that for each element to be proven, the fact-finder must believe that the facts asserted by the proponent are more probably true than false. *Id.* When there is no direct evidence on a particular issue, a fair preponderance of the evidence may be supported by circumstantial evidence. *Narragansett Electric Co. v. Carbone*, 898 A.2d 87 (R.I. 2006).

C. Relevant Statute and Regulation

R.I. Gen Laws § 23-17.9-8 provides as follows:

Disciplinary proceedings. – The department may suspend or revoke any certificate of registration issued under this chapter or may reprimand, censure, or otherwise discipline or may deny an application for registration in accordance with the provisions of this section upon decision and after a hearing as provided by chapter 35 of title 42, as amended, in any of the following cases:

(1) Upon proof that the nursing assistant is unfit or incompetent by reason of negligence, habits, or other causes;

(5) Has engaged in conduct detrimental to the health, welfare and safety of patients/residents in his or her care.

(6) Any other causes that may be set forth in regulations promulgated under this chapter.

Section 22.6 of the Licensing Regulation provides as follows:

A. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 23-17.9-8 and 23-17.9-9, and upon a decision after a hearing as provided in accordance with the Rhode Island Administrative Procedures Act and the Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Practices and Procedures Before the Rhode Island Department of Health (Part 10-05-4 of this Title), the Department may deny, suspend, or revoke a license issued under this Part, or may reprimand, censure, or otherwise discipline an individual who has been found guilty of violations of the Act or this Part in any of the following cases:

2. Upon proof that the nursing assistant or medication aide has engaged in unprofessional conduct including, but not limited to, departure from, or failure to conform to, the standards of acceptable and prevailing practice.

D. Whether Respondent Violated R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.9-8 and/or Licensing Regulation

Based on the pleadings and the undisputed evidence, the Respondent accessed her patient's debit card and stole money from her patient. The Respondent's actions violated R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.9-8(1) (unfit or incompetent because of negligence, habits, or other causes); (5) (conduct detrimental to health and safety of patient); and (6) (violation of the regulation). The Respondent's actions also violated Section 22.6.1(A)(2) (unprofessional conduct) of the Licensing Regulation.

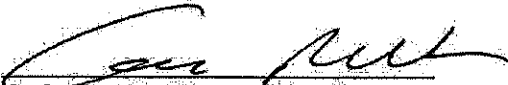
VI. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Respondent is registered as a nursing assistant pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.9-1 *et seq.* and whose registration was summarily suspended on December 27, 2023.
2. A Notice was sent by the Department to Respondent on March 25, 2024 to the Respondent's most recent address on record with the Department.
3. A hearing was scheduled for April 29, 2024, at which time the Respondent did not appear. As the Respondent had adequate notice of hearing, the undersigned held the hearing that day.
4. The facts contained in Section IV and V are reincorporated by reference herein.

VII. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing, the Respondent violated R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-7.9-8(1); (5); and (6) and violated Section 22.6(A)(2) of the Licensing Regulation and pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.9-8, the undersigned recommends that Respondent's nursing assistant registration be revoked.

Entered this day 14th May, 2024.



Catherine R. Warren, Esquire
Hearing Officer

ORDER

I have read the Hearing Officer's Decision and Recommendation in this matter, and I hereby take the following action with regard to the Decision and Recommendation:

ADOPT
 REJECT
 MODIFY

Dated: 5/15/24


Staci A. Fischer, MD, FACP, FIDSA
Acting Director

NOTICE OF APPELLATE RIGHTS

THIS DECISION CONSTITUTES A FINAL ORDER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS § 42-35-12. PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS §42-15-15, THIS ORDER MAY BE APPEALED TO THE SUPERIOR COURT SITTING IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF PROVIDENCE WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS OF THE MAILING DATE OF THIS DECISION. SUCH APPEAL, IF TAKEN, MUST BE COMPLETED BY FILING A PETITION FOR REVIEW IN SUPERIOR COURT. THE FILING OF THE COMPLAINT DOES NOT ITSELF STAY ENFORCEMENT OF THIS ORDER. THE AGENCY MAY GRANT, OR THE REVIEWING COURT MAY ORDER, A STAY UPON THE APPROPRIATE TERMS.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify on this ____ day of May, 2024 that a copy of the within Decision and Notice of Appellate Rights was sent by first class mail and certified mail to Ms. Christina Scanlon, 144 Rand Street, Central Falls, R.I. 02863 and by electronic delivery to the Respondent at cscanlon322@yahoo.com and by electronic delivery to Anita Flax, Esquire, and Linda Esposito, Board Manager, Department of Health, Three Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908.
