

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

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In the Matter of:

Mirian Lima,  
Respondent.

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Case No.: 22-0442  
Board of Nursing Assistants

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

This matter arose pursuant to a Notice of Hearing and Specification of Charges (“Notice”) issued to Mirian Lima (“Respondent”) by the Department of Health (“Department”) on August 17, 2022. The Respondent holds a registration as a nursing assistant pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.9-1 *et seq.* A hearing was scheduled for September 7, 2022, at which time the Respondent did not appear at the hearing. 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 Notice was delivered to Respondent’s last known address by first class and certified mail.<sup>1</sup> Since the Respondent was adequately noticed of hearing, a hearing was held before the undersigned on September 7, 2022.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Section 4.13.2 of the Hearing Regulation provides that a

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<sup>1</sup> See Department’s Exhibits One (1) (Notice indicating mailing for regular mail and certified mail to address on record with the Department); Two (2) (copy of the United States Post Office tracking sheet showing attempted delivery of certified mail); and Three (3) (Respondent’s licensing history with last known address on record with Department). The Notice was also sent by electronic delivery to the Respondent’s email address contained in her licensing history. Department’s Exhibits One (1) and Three (3). This matter was initially noticed for hearing on June 22, 2022 but the Respondent did not appear and requested a new hearing date so it was rescheduled for September 7, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to a delegation of authority by the Director of the Department of Health.

be entered 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 made many unauthorized charges on a credit card owned by a patient in her care. The Respondent admitted to the patient’s daughter that she used her mother’s (the Respondent’s patient) credit card without authorization. The Respondent admitted to the Department that she used her patient’s credit card without authorization. See Department’s Exhibits Four (4) (complaint to Department from patient’s family detailing that Respondent was providing home health care and providing copies of bank statements showing \$1,154.74<sup>\*</sup> in unauthorized charges to patient’s credit card); Five (5) (Respondent’s text message to her patient’s daughter); and Six (6) Respondent’s statement to the Department).

## **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;

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

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:

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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**

The Department sought revocation of the Respondent's nursing assistant registration and argued the evidence showed the Respondent made unauthorized charges on a patient's credit card.

Based on the pleadings and the undisputed evidence, the Respondent fraudulently used her patient's credit card to make unauthorized purchases in an amount over \$1,500. The Respondent's actions violated R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.9-8(1) (unfit or incompetent because of negligence, habits, or other causes) and (5) (conduct detrimental to health and safety of patient). 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.*

2. A Notice was sent by the Department to Respondent on August 17, 2022 to the Respondent's most recent address on record with the Department.

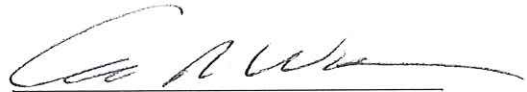
3. A hearing was scheduled for September 7, 2022, at which time the Respondent did not appear. As the Respondent had adequate notice of hearing, the undersigned held the hearing that day.

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) and (5) 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 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2022.

  
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: 9/19/2023

//Utpala Bandy, MD, MPH  

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Utpala Bandy, MD, MPH  
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 20<sup>TH</sup> day of September, 2022 that a copy of the within Decision and Notice of Appellate Rights was sent by first class mail and certified mail, return receipt requested and by electronic delivery to Ms. Mirian Lima, 40 Grotto Avenue, Apt. 7, Pawtucket, R.I. 02860 and MIIMIX18@gmail.com and by electronic delivery to Anita Flax, Esquire, and Linda Esposito, Board Manager, Department of Health, Three Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908.

  
LINDA L. ESPOSITO