

**STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION
BOARD OF NURSING**

IN RE: CORISSA LAWS

DOCKET NO. 2023-174

Appearances:

Prosecutor:	George L. Hasselback, Esq.
Respondent:	Did not appear

Hearing Officer: Wesley M. Lawrence

DEFAULT ORDER

Based on the evidence before me, I find as follows:

1. Respondent, Corissa Laws, of Snellville, Georgia, was not licensed by the State of Vermont in any profession at any time relevant to this matter.
2. Respondent assumed the identity of another individual who had a similar first name, and who was licensed as a Licensed Practical Nurse ("LPN") in the State of Florida, so that she could appear to be qualified to practice as an LPN in Vermont.
3. The State filed the Specification of Charges in this matter on November 29, 2023, which are hereby incorporated into this Order by reference, as if set forth at length herein.
4. On January 23, 2024, the State moved for Respondent to be found in default because she had not responded to the Specification of Charges. A default hearing was scheduled for and held on January 24, 2024.
5. Respondent appeared at the January 24, 2024 Default Hearing.
6. The presiding hearing officer granted Respondent twenty (20) additional days to respond to the Specification of Charges, a deadline of February 13, 2024.
7. Respondent failed to file a response to the Specification of Charges by February 13, 2024.
8. On or about April 24, 2024, the State again moved for Respondent to be found in default.

9. I held a Default Hearing in the above matter on May 23, 2024 pursuant to 3 V.S.A. §129(f) and 3 V.S.A. §809(d). This public hearing was held electronically via Microsoft Teams pursuant to the Notice of Default Hearing.
10. Julie Bowen, the Docket Clerk for the Office of Professional Regulation, testified that she sent the Notice of Default Hearing to Respondent on April 24, 2024 by regular mail, certified mail, and e-mail. None of these were returned as undeliverable. I find that notice of the May 23, 2024 Default Hearing was proper.
11. Respondent has not filed an answer, has not substantively acknowledged in any way the Specification of Charges, and did not attend the second Default Hearing in this matter.
12. Under the Administrative Rules of the Office of Professional Regulation, Rule 3.4, a default may be entered when an answer is not filed within the required time period.
13. I find Respondent to be in default based on Ms. Bowen's testimony, the State's Motion for Default, Specification of Charges, presentation of evidence, and by taking official notice of the Office of Professional Regulation file. The allegations contained in the Specification of Charges are therefore treated as the facts upon which the Board of Nursing may issue an order of professional discipline. *See* OPR Rule 3.4, 3 V.S.A. §809(d), and 3 V.S.A. §814(c).
14. I shall treat the factual allegations in the Specification of Charges as proven. *See* O.P.R. Rule 3.4.
15. I find that Respondent, on at least forty-five (45) occasions, engaged in unauthorized practice as an LPN as contemplated under 3 V.S.A. §127, and is subject to sanction under 3 V.S.A. §127(b)(2)(A): ("[t]he Attorney General or an attorney assigned by the Office of Professional Regulation may elect to bring an action seeking only a civil penalty or not more than \$2,500.00 for practicing or permitting the practice of a regulated profession without authority before the board having regulatory authority over the profession or before an administrative law officer.")
16. The State recommended that Respondent be ordered to cease and desist the practice of nursing and/or as an LPN, and be assessed a monetary civil penalty pursuant to 3 V.S.A. §127(b)(2)(A). At the Default Hearing, the State requested a monetary penalty of \$5,000.00. I agree that an order to cease and desist along with a monetary penalty is appropriate.
17. While there is authority under 3 V.S.A. §127(c) to impose a fine of not more than \$5,000.00, this was not part of the relief requested in the Specification of Charges, and I do not believe notice of a fine greater than \$2,500.00 was properly provided. Therefore, the Board of Nursing may find, based on the finding of Respondent's default, that Respondent may be fined not more than \$2,500.00 consistent with the above.

PROPOSED ORDER

Consistent with the above, the Board of Nursing hereby **ORDERS** that the Respondent, Corissa Laws, cease and desist from the practice of nursing in Vermont in any form including, but not limited to, that of a Licensed Practical Nurse, and be fined the sum of \$2,500.00. Such fine shall be paid to the Office of Professional Regulation in full no later than thirty (30) days from the date that this order is entered.

I hereby forward the above Proposed Order to the Board of Nursing with the recommendation that the Board approve it.

DATED at Montpelier, Vermont this 28th day of May, 2024.



Wesley M. Lawrence
Hearing Officer, Vermont Board of Nursing

The Vermont Board of Nursing, or the Director of the Office of Professional Regulation, considered the Proposed Order and its basis, above, on June 10, 2024.

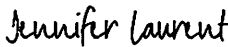
After considering the Proposed Order and its basis, above, the Board of Nursing takes the following action:

- ☐ Rejects the Hearing Officer's recommendation, and schedules the matter for hearing.
- ☐ Schedules the matter for additional evidence.
- ☒ Accepts the Hearing Officer's recommendation and orders the recommended discipline as set forth in the Proposed Order above.

SO ORDERED,

Vermont Board of Nursing or Director of the Office of Professional Regulation.

DocuSigned by:



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Vermont Board of Nursing

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION DATE OF ENTRY:

6/10/24

APPEAL RIGHTS

This is a final administrative determination by the Vermont Board of Nursing. A party aggrieved by a final decision of a board or hearing authority may appeal this decision by filing a written Notice of Appeal with the Director of the Office of Professional Regulation, Vermont Secretary of State, 89 Main Street, Floor 3, Montpelier, VT 05620-3402 within 30 days of the entry of this order.

If an appeal is filed, the Director of the office of Professional Regulation shall assign the case to an appellate officer. The review shall be conducted on the basis of the record created before the Board. In cases of alleged irregularities in procedure before the board, not shown in the record, proof on that issue may be taken by the appellate officer. 3 V.S.A. §§129(d) and 130a.

**STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION
BOARD OF NURSING**

IN RE:

Corissa Laws

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Docket No. 2023-174

MOTION FOR DEFAULT

NOW COMES the State of Vermont, by and through Prosecuting Attorney George L. Hasselback, and pursuant to Rule 3.3 of the Administrative Rules of Practice for the Office of Professional Regulation (“ARPOPR”), hereby moves that the Board of Nursing (the “Board”) find Respondent Corissa Laws (“Respondent”) in default for the reasons stated in the following Memorandum of Law.

MEMORANDUM OF LAW

Rule 3.3 of ARPOPR requires a respondent to file an answer to a specification of charges “within 20 days of the date on which the notice of charges was mailed by the Director.” Under the Rules, if a respondent fails to file a timely answer, a default hearing shall be conducted. ARPOPR 3.4. At the default hearing, “the allegations of the charges will be treated as proven and disciplinary action will be taken.” *Id.*

In this matter, Respondent has failed to file a response to the charges and is, therefore, in default. The State filed the Specification of Charges against Respondent on November 29, 2023. Respondent was notified of the charges by letter from the Docket Clerk of the Office of Professional Regulation, sent by both certified and first class mail, on November 30, 2023. *See* ARPOPR 3.2. Respondent’s answer was due on or before December 20, 2023. *See* ARPOPR 3.4. A hearing was held on February 13, 2024 and Respondent was given an additional 20 days to submit an answer. As of this date, Respondent has failed to submit an answer.

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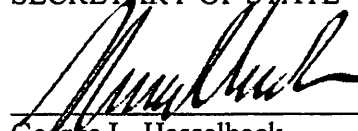
Prosecuting Attorney
Office of
Professional
Regulation 89 Main
Street
3rd Floor
Montpelier,

WHEREFORE, in accordance with ARPOPR 3.3, et seq., the State respectfully requests that the Board schedule a default hearing and find Respondent in default.

DATED at Montpelier, Vermont this 23rd day of January, 2024.

STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE

By:


George L. Hasselback
Prosecuting Attorney
George.hasselback@vermont.gov

STATE OF VERMONT



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**STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION
BOARD OF NURSING**

**In re: Carissa Laws
License No. N/A**

Docket No. 2023-174

ENTRY ORDER

This matter was set for a default hearing on February 13, 2024 before the undersigned Administrative Law Officer. Respondent Carissa Laws had failed to answer the Specification of Charges (SOC) which was filed on or about November 29, 2023. However, Respondent was sent a notice of default hearing and appeared (remotely) at the hearing. Prosecuting Attorney George Hasselback, Esq. appeared for the State.

Ms. Laws explained that she had been incarcerated at the time that the SOC was filed and did not receive actual notice of them. She also said that she had received the SOC with the hearing notice. Ms. Laws further stated that she wanted the opportunity to file an Answer to the SOC. Since Vermont law does not favor a default, the Prosecuting Attorney agreed to permit Ms. Laws to file an Answer provided that she do so within 20 days of the Date of Entry of this Order.

ORDER

1. The Motion for Default is withdrawn.
2. Leave is given to Respondent Carissa Laws to file an Answer with the Docket Clerk (with a copy to Attorney Hasselback) provided that she do so within twenty (20) days of the Date of Entry of this Order.
3. If an Answer is not filed within twenty (20) days, leave is given to the Prosecuting Attorney to re-file a motion for default.

Dated at Montpelier, Vt., this 13th day of February 2024,



Michael S. Kupersmith
Administrative Law Officer

Date of Entry: 2/13/24

**STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION
BOARD OF NURSING**

IN RE:)
Corissa Laws) **Docket No. 2023-174**
License No. n/a)

SPECIFICATION OF CHARGES

NOW COMES the State of Vermont and makes the following Charges against the Respondent, Corissa Laws ("Respondent"):

Board Authority

1. The Vermont State Board of Nursing (the "Board") has jurisdiction to investigate and adjudicate allegations of unauthorized practice pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 127 and unprofessional conduct pursuant to 3 V.S.A. §129(a); 3 V.S.A. §129a; 3 V.S.A. §814(d); 26 V.S.A. Chapter 28; the Administrative Rules of the Board of Nursing (the "ARBN"); and the Rules of the Office of Professional Regulation ("OPR").

Statement of Facts

2. In Vermont, the profession of Licensed Practical Nurse ("LPN") is regulated by the Board under 26 V.S.A. § 1574(a)(5).
3. Corissa Laws ("Respondent") of Snellville, GA is not licensed by the State of Vermont in any profession.
4. On or before January of 2022, Respondent began to impersonate another individual who had a similar first name, and who was licensed as an LPN in the State of Florida.
5. Respondent assumed this identity so that she could appear to be qualified to practice as an LPN.
6. Act 6 and Act 91, emergency legislation passed in Vermont to provide health care regulatory flexibility during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, extended to out-of-state licensed health care workers, the privilege to practice their licensed professions in the State of Vermont without formal licenses issued by OPR. This law was in effect until March 31, 2022.
7. Using the identity that she had fraudulently assumed, Respondent registered with OPR as an LPN licensed in the State of Florida in order to avail herself of the opportunity to practice in Vermont under this emergency legislation.

STATE OF VERMONT



Prosecuting Attorney
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8. Respondent subsequently became employed by TLC Nursing and, over the course of several months, worked as an LPN in several facilities in the State of Vermont.
9. On January 23, 2022, Respondent worked as an LPN at a nursing home in Rutland, Vermont.
10. On January 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and February 1, 2022, Respondent worked as an LPN at a substance use treatment facility in Bradford, Vermont.
11. On February 9, 10, and 11, 2022, Respondent worked as an LPN at a nursing home and rehabilitation facility in St. Albans City, Vermont.
12. On February 17, 21, 23, 25, and 26, 2022, Respondent worked as an LPN at a nursing home in Rutland, Vermont.
13. On March 6, 7, 8, and 9, 2022, Respondent worked as an LPN at a nursing home in Newport, Vermont.
14. On April 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and February 1, 2022, Respondent worked as an LPN at a nursing and rehabilitation facility in Brattleboro, Vermont.
15. On May 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, 2022, Respondent worked as an LPN at a nursing home in Colchester, Vermont.
16. On May 29, 30, 31, June 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, 2022, Respondent worked as an LPN at a nursing home in Burlington, Vermont.
17. On July 15 and 16, 2022, Respondent worked as an LPN at a nursing home in Windsor, Vermont.
18. On or about August 10, 2022, Respondent used the identity she fraudulently assumed to apply for licensure in the State of New Hampshire as an LPN.
19. On or about August 15, 2022, New Hampshire issued an LPN license to Respondent.
20. Respondent, while still employed by TLC Nursing, subsequently worked as an LPN at several locations in New Hampshire.
21. Respondent was paid more than one-hundred thousand dollars (\$100,00.00) for the time she worked as an LPN under a fraudulently assumed identity (the majority of which was for work performed in Vermont).

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Violation One: 3 V.S.A. §127(b)(2)(A): The Attorney General or an attorney assigned by the Office of Professional Regulation may elect to bring an action seeking only a civil penalty of not more than \$2,500.00 for practicing or permitting the practice of a regulated profession without authority before the board having regulatory authority over the profession or before an administrative law officer.

22. The State re-alleges and incorporates Paragraphs 2 through 21 above.
23. 26 V.S.A. § 1584(a)(3) provides that practicing nursing is prohibited unless a nurse is duly registered and currently licensed with the State of Vermont.
24. Paragraphs 2 through 21 above demonstrate that:
 - a. On January 23, 2022, Respondent practiced as an LPN at a nursing home in Rutland, Vermont without proper authority by fraudulently assuming the identity of a licensed LPN.
 - b. On January 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and February 1, 2022, Respondent practiced as an LPN at a substance use treatment facility in Bradford, Vermont without proper authority by fraudulently assuming the identity of a licensed LPN.
 - c. On February 9, 10, and 11, 2022, Respondent practiced as an LPN at a nursing home and rehabilitation facility in St. Albans City, Vermont without proper authority by fraudulently assuming the identity of a licensed LPN.
 - d. On February 17, 21, 23, 25, and 26, 2022, Respondent practiced as an LPN at a nursing home in Rutland, Vermont without proper authority by fraudulently assuming the identity of a licensed LPN.
 - e. On March 6, 7, 8, and 9, 2022, Respondent practiced as an LPN at a nursing home in Newport, Vermont without proper authority by fraudulently assuming the identity of a licensed LPN.
 - f. On April 27, 28, 29, 30 31, and February 1, 2022, Respondent practiced as an LPN at a nursing and rehabilitation facility in Brattleboro, Vermont without proper authority by fraudulently assuming the identity of a licensed LPN.
 - g. On May 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, 2022, Respondent practiced as an LPN at a nursing home in Colchester, Vermont without proper authority by fraudulently assuming the identity of a licensed LPN.
 - h. On May 29, 30, 31, June 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, 2022, Respondent practiced as an LPN at a nursing home in Burlington, Vermont without proper authority by fraudulently assuming the identity of a licensed LPN.
 - i. On July 15 and 16, 2022, Respondent practiced as an LPN at a nursing home in Windsor, Vermont without proper authority by fraudulently assuming the identity of a licensed LPN.

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25. The act(s), omission(s), and/or circumstance(s) described above constitute grounds for a civil penalty because Respondent has committed unauthorized practice in violation of 3 V.S.A. §127(b)(2)(A).

Relief Requested

WHEREFORE, the State of Vermont respectfully requests that Respondent be assessed a monetary civil penalty pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 127(b)(2)(A).

DATED at Montpelier, Vermont this 29th day of November, 2023.

STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE

By: 
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STATE OF VERMONT



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