

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

**IN RE: STANDRA FREE
LICENSE NO. 075.0145751**

DOCKET NO. 2024-202

APPEARANCES:

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

Hearing Officer: Wesley M. Lawrence

ORDER ON MOTION FOR DEFAULT

I held a Default Hearing in the above matter on May 8, 2025 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 a Notice of Hearing. Based on the evidence before me, I find as follows:

1. Respondent, Standra Free, held a provisional license from the State of Vermont to practice as a Licensed Nursing Assistant (“LNA”) under license number 075.0144871PROV. This license was originally issued on May 1, 2024, and expired on August 14, 2024.
2. Respondent also holds a license from the State of Vermont to practice as an LNA under license number 075.0145751, which is currently subject to a summary suspension. The Specification of Charges indicates that this license expired on November 30, 2024. At the Default Hearing, it was explained that this license was in effect after November 30, 2024, but was summarily suspended following a hearing before the Board of Nursing held on January 16, 2025. That order is hereby incorporated by reference as if set forth at length in this decision.
3. On April 14, 2025, the State moved for Respondent to be found in default because she has not responded to the Specification of Charges in this matter.
4. The State filed the Specification of Charges in this matter on February 18, 2025.
5. Gina Hruban, Administrative Services Coordinator II for the Office of Professional Regulation, testified that the Office of Professional Regulation (“OPR”) sent the Specification of Charges to Respondent on February 18, 2025 by first class mail, certified mail, and e-mail. The first class, certified and e-mailed versions of the Specification of Charges were not returned as undeliverable. The certified mail return receipt was returned marked “unclaimed” on March 27, 2025 and the first class mailing was returned marked “refused” on March 11, 2025. I find that notice of the Specification of Charges was proper.

6. Ms. Hruban testified that OPR sent the Notice of Hearing for Default Judgment to the Respondent on April 14, 2025 by regular mail, certified mail, and e-mail. The first class mailing was returned marked "unable to forward." The certified mail return receipt has not yet been received. The emailed copy was not returned as undeliverable. I find that notice of the Default Hearing was proper.
7. Respondent has not filed an answer, has not acknowledged in any way the Specification of Charges, and did not appear for the Default Hearing in this matter. Respondent did not appear for her summary suspension hearing in January 2025, either.
8. 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, which is twenty days. *See* O.P.R. Rule 3.3.
9. I find Respondent to be in default based on Ms. Hruban's testimony, the State's Motion for Default and 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).
10. I shall treat the factual allegations in the Specification of Charges as proven. *See* O.P.R. Rule 3.4.
11. I find that Respondent committed two (2) violations:
 - 26 V.S.A. §1582(a)(3) (Engaging in conduct of a character likely to harm the public); and
 - 3 V.S.A. §129a(a)(15) (Failing to exercise independent professional judgment in the performance of licensed activities when that judgment is necessary to avoid action repugnant to the profession)

as set forth at length in the Specification of Charges, which is incorporated by reference as if set forth at length herein, and should be appended to this decision.
12. The State recommended that the Respondent's summary suspension continue indefinitely and that Respondent must apply to the Board of Nursing for reinstatement. I find that this is an appropriate sanction.

PROPOSED ORDER

Consistent with the above, and the recommendation of the State, it is **ORDERED** that Respondent's Licensed Nursing Assistant license, already under summary suspension, remain **INDEFINITELY SUSPENDED**. For such indefinite suspension to end, Respondent must apply for reinstatement and, if reinstatement is granted, be subject to whatever conditions(s) the Board of Nursing deems appropriate.

DATED at Montpelier, Vermont this 9th day of May 2025.



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 July 14, 2025.

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.
- ☒ X 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.

Signed by:



ESEC693720C84FA

Vermont Board of Nursing

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION DATE OF ENTRY: 7/16/25

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.

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SECRETARY OF STATE
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BOARD OF NURSING**

IN RE:	)	
Standra Free	)	Docket No. 2024-202
License No. 075.0145751	)	

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 Standra Free ("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 February 18, 2025. 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 February 18, 2025.. See ARPOPR 3.2. Respondent's answer was due on or before March 10, 2025. See ARPOPR 3.4. As of this date, Respondent has failed to submit an answer.

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Prosecuting Attorney
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Regulation 89 Main
Street
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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 14th day of April 2025.

STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE

By: *George Hasselback*
George L. Hasselback
Prosecuting Attorney
George.hasselback@vermont.gov

STATE OF VERMONT



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	)	

SPECIFICATION OF CHARGES

NOW COMES the State of Vermont and hereby makes the following charges against Respondent Standra Free:

Board Authority

1. The Vermont State Board of Nursing (the "Board") has jurisdiction to investigate and adjudicate allegations of unprofessional conduct committed by Licensed Nursing Assistants ("LNAs") 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. Standra Free ("Respondent") of Hattiesberg, MS, held a provisional license to practice as an LNA under license number 075.0144871PROV. This license was originally issued on May 1, 2024, and expired on August 14, 2024.
3. Respondent also held a license to practice as an LNA under license number 075.0145751. This license was originally issued on August 14, 2024, and expired on November 30, 2024.
4. At all times relevant to this matter, Respondent was employed as an LNA at a residential care facility located in Brattleboro, VT ("the Facility").
5. On or about August 10, 2024, Respondent was working at the Facility and assigned to care for a patient identified as "R01".
6. R01 has been diagnosed with developmental disabilities and autism, has minimal ability to communicate verbally, and receives two-to-one supervision 24 hours a day.
7. On that date, another LNA (identified by the initials "KL") was also assigned to provide care to R01.
8. Because she was concerned with Respondent's actions, KL surreptitiously video recorded Respondent's on or about August 10, 2024.

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9. These video recordings show Respondent striking R01 from behind with Respondent's knee.
10. These video recordings also show Respondent sitting in a chair with their legs over the shoulders of R01 and their legs crossed over R01's chest.
11. Respondent appeared to be using their legs to restrain R01.
12. Respondent can also be seen to be moving their hand towards R01's face.
13. Subsequently, KL described these hand movements as Respondent flicking R01's face.
14. Respondent can also be seen striking R01 on her shoulder.
15. RL also reported that she observed Respondent holding R01's nostrils shut, but was not able to record this behavior.
16. KL reported Respondent's behavior at the end of her shift.
17. KL explained that she did not intervene or immediately report Respondent's behavior, because she (KL) was fearful of Respondent and wanted to stay with R01 to ensure R01's safety and document as much of Respondent's behavior as possible.
18. Respondent's employment was subsequently terminated.
19. On or about December 6, 2024, Respondent was charged with one count of Abuse of a Vulnerable Adult, a felony, pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 1376(a).
20. On or about December 9, 2024, an arrest warrant was issued by the Vermont Superior Court, Windsor Division for Respondent's arrest in connection with these charges.
21. This arrest warrant remains pending as of the date of this filing.
22. On or about January 16, 2025, the Board suspended Respondent's license to practice nursing in Vermont.

Violation One: 26 V.S.A. § 1582(a)(3) Engaging in conduct of a character likely to harm the public.

23. The State re-alleges and incorporates Paragraphs 3 through 22 above.
24. Vermont law prohibits LNAs from engaging in conduct of a character likely to harm the public.

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25. Paragraphs 3 through 22 above demonstrate that Respondent engaged in conduct of a character likely to harm the public when she restrained R01 with her legs, flicked R01's face with her hands, struck R01 on the shoulder, and held R01's nostrils shut.
26. The act(s), omission(s), and/or circumstance(s) described above constitute grounds for discipline because Respondent committed unprofessional conduct in violation of 26 V.S.A. §1582(a)(3).

Violation Two: 3 V.S.A. § 129a(a)(15) Failing to exercise independent professional judgment in the performance of licensed activities when that judgment is necessary to avoid action repugnant to the obligations of the profession.

27. The State re-alleges and incorporates Paragraphs 3 through 22 above.
28. Vermont law requires LNAs to exercise independent professional judgment in the performance of licensed activities when that judgment is necessary to avoid action repugnant to the obligations of the profession.
29. Paragraphs 3 through 22 above demonstrate that Respondent failed to exercise independent professional judgment in the exercise of his LNA duties when she restrained R01 with her legs, flicked R01's face with her hands, struck R01 on the shoulder, and held R01's nostrils shut.
30. The act(s), omission(s), and/or circumstance(s) described above constitute grounds for discipline because Respondent committed unprofessional conduct in violation of 3 V.S.A. §129a(a)(15).

WHEREFORE, Respondent's license should be revoked, suspended, reprimanded, conditioned, or otherwise disciplined.

STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE

Signed: February 18, 2025.

By: *George Hasselback*
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Prosecuting Attorney
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STATE OF VERMONT



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Office of Professional Regulation
Answer

Case Name:	Docket Number:
Your Name: _____ (person completing the form B either the respondent or the respondent's attorney)	
Telephone: (daytime) _____	E-mail _____

Attach Additional Sheets As Needed

1. **Undisputed Facts:** State all material facts in the charges that you do not dispute. You may use the paragraph numbers from the specification of charges rather than repeating each statement.

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2. Disputed Issues of Fact: State all material facts that you contend are disputed. You may use the paragraph numbers from the specification of charges rather than repeating each statement.

[illegible]

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3. Legal Defenses: List all defenses that you intend to present to the charges.

4. Sign and Date: By signing, I affirm that all pages of this form are complete and truthful.

I ____ have ____ have not attached additional information.

Signature

Date

Please mail the original to:

Vermont Secretary of State
Office of Professional Regulation
Attn: Docket Clerk
89 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05620-3402

You must also send a copy to:

Prosecuting Attorney who charged the case
89 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05620-3402