

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

IN RE:	)	
ERNEST J. LUIKART	)	Docket No. 2015-136
License No. 026.0091419	)	

STIPULATION AND CONSENT ORDER

STIPULATION

NOW COME the State of Vermont, by and through State Prosecuting Attorney Elizabeth A. Jarvis, and the Respondent, Ernest J. Luikart, represented by Devin McLaughlin, Esq., who stipulate and agree as follows:

Board Authority

1. The Vermont State Board of Nursing (the "Board") has authority to issue warnings or reprimands; suspend, revoke, limit, or condition current licenses; or prevent the renewal of lapsed licenses if, after disciplinary hearing, the Board finds that the Respondent has engaged in unprofessional conduct. 3 V.S.A. § 129(a); 3 V.S.A. § 129a; 3 V.S.A. § 814(d); 26 V.S.A. §1582; 26 V.S.A. §1584; the Administrative Rules of the Board of Nursing (the "ARBN"); and the Rules of the Office of Professional Regulation.

Stipulated of Facts

2. Ernest J. Luikart (the "Respondent") of Thetford, Vermont is licensed by the State of Vermont as a Registered Nurse under license number 026.0091419. This license was originally issued on or about February 5, 2013, and expires on or about March 31, 2017.
3. During the relevant time period, Respondent was employed as a Registered Nurse at Brookside Health and Rehabilitation Center (the "Facility") in White River Junction, Vermont.
4. On or about April 3, 2015, the Office of Professional Regulation received a phone call from the Respondent stating that he was self-reporting the fact that he had diverted narcotic medication from the Facility for his own use.
5. On or about April 6, 2015, the Respondent provided a written statement to the Facility and admitted the following:

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- a. On or about March 27, 2015, the Respondent brought one 5 mg Oxycodone pill to the room of patient J.B.
 - b. Patient J.B. was asleep. The correct protocol would have been to waste the pill, which would involve destroying the pill in the presence of another nurse and documenting the event.
 - c. Instead, the Respondent put the pill in a plastic envelope, put the envelope in his pocket, and left with the pill at the end of his shift.
6. A review of medical records indicates that while the Respondent did work on March 27, 2015, he did not work with patient J.B. on that date. Medical records indicate that on or about March 30, 2015, the Respondent signed a 5 mg Oxycodone tablet out on the narcotic log for patient J.B. The Respondent also signed the Medication Administration Record to indicate that he had administered the 5 mg Oxycodone tablet to patient J.B. on that date.
7. On or about April 9, 2015, Investigator Dennis Menard interviewed the Respondent. The Respondent admitted the conduct contained in paragraph 5 above. The Respondent also admitted to ingesting the pill when he returned home after his shift.

Violations

8. The act(s), omission(s), and/or circumstance(s) described above constitute grounds for discipline because the Respondent has committed unprofessional conduct in violation of:
 - a. 3 V.S.A §129a(a)(3) (Failing to comply with provisions of federal or state statutes or rules governing the practice of the profession);
 - b. 3 V.S.A §129a(a)(7) (Willfully making or filing false reports or records in the practice of the profession; willfully impeding or obstructing the proper making or filing of reports or records or willfully failing to file the proper reports or records);
 - c. 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);
 - d. 3 V.S.A §129a(b)(1) and (2) (Failure to practice competently by reason of any cause on a single occasion or on multiple occasions may constitute unprofessional conduct, whether actual injury to a client, patient, or customer has occurred. Failure to practice competently includes: (1) performance of unsafe or unacceptable patient or client care; or (2) failure to conform to the essential standards of acceptable and prevailing practice).

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Understandings

9. Respondent admits that the facts above are true and that the conditions below are necessary to protect the public.
10. Respondent understands that the Nursing Board must review and accept the terms of the Consent Order. If the Board rejects any portion, the entire Stipulation and Consent Order shall be null and void.
11. Respondent specifically waives any claims that any disclosures made to the full Board during its review of this agreement have prejudiced his rights to a fair and impartial hearing in future hearings if this agreement is not accepted by the Board.
12. Respondent has read and reviewed this entire document and agrees that it contains the entire agreement between the parties.
13. Respondent is not under the influence of any drugs or alcohol at the time he signs this Stipulation and Consent Order.
14. Respondent voluntarily enters into this agreement after the opportunity to consult with legal counsel and is not being coerced by anyone into signing this Stipulation and Consent Order.
15. Respondent voluntarily waives his right to a contested hearing before the Board of Nursing and waives any right to appeal from this Stipulation and Consent Order.
16. Respondent agrees that the Order set forth below may be entered by the Board.

ORDER

Based on the Stipulation above, it is **ORDERED AND ADJUDGED** as follows:

- A. The Board of Nursing hereby **CONDITIONS** the Respondent's license to practice nursing **for one (1) year from the date of entry below**. The conditions are as follows:
 1. Re-issuance of License. Upon the commencement of these conditions, Respondent shall be issued a license labeled "conditioned."
 2. Length of Time of Conditions Imposed. The conditions shall remain in place until Respondent has completed all conditions ordered. Respondent shall be subject to the conditions until Respondent completes **a minimum of one (1) year** of supervised nursing in which Respondent works at least forty (40) hours every two (2) weeks as a nurse. Part time hours of fewer than forty (40) hours every two (2) weeks shall be credited on a prorated basis. Respondent shall be prohibited from working more than forty (40) hours per week.

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3. Completion of Substance Abuse Counseling and Treatment Plan. Respondent shall enter into and continue substance abuse counseling with a treating professional pre-approved by the Board until the treating professional certifies to the Board, in writing, that such counseling is no longer necessary. Respondent shall comply with the substance abuse treatment plan approved by the Board and the treating professional. Respondent shall provide a copy of his Initial Assessment Abstract, dated November 9, 2015, and completed by Andrew Nuss, MA, LCMHC, to his treating professional.
4. Reports from Treating Professional. Respondent shall authorize Respondent's treating professional to submit to the Board evidence of satisfactory progress with the treatment plan during the effective period of this Consent Order. These reports shall be submitted in writing on forms issued by the Board. Respondent shall authorize Respondent's treating professional to provide all information requested by the Nursing Board, either orally or in writing, at any time during the period this Consent Order is in effect.
5. Random Drug and Alcohol Testing. Respondent shall submit to random drug and alcohol screenings at the request of the Board or its designee for the duration of this Consent Order. Respondent shall designate a person or entity that has been pre-approved by the Board or its designee to administer random drug and alcohol screens. All testing shall be done on a random, unannounced basis and analyzed by a lab qualified to analyze samples for forensic purposes and approved by the Board. All urine specimens collected for tests shall be collected in an observed setting. All screens shall be negative.

Failure to appear for, refusal to provide, adulteration of, dilution of, or tampering with a sample for any urine screen shall cause that screen to be presumed positive. Any positive screen shall constitute a violation of this Order.

6. Abstain from Drug and Alcohol Use. Respondent shall abstain completely from the consumption or possession of alcohol and drugs.
7. Drug Use Exception. Respondent may take scheduled/controlled medications lawfully prescribed for a bona fide illness or condition by a health care practitioner disclosed to the Board in writing by Respondent within forty-eight (48) hours of the prescription. Respondent's health care practitioner shall inform the Board, in writing and on appropriate letterhead, of knowledge of Respondent's substance abuse issue(s) within seven (7) days of entering into the practitioner/patient relationship. Additionally, the practitioner shall inform the Board of all scheduled/controlled medications prescribed – and the anticipation of how long such prescriptions will need to be taken – within seven (7) days of the prescription.

The Board or its designee may request that the practitioner document the necessity for the prescribed scheduled/controlled medications or other medications known to have abuse potential. It is not anticipated that Respondent would be prescribed

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scheduled/controlled medication during the term of this Consent Order for a period greater than fourteen (14) days, but if so, then the conditions herein may be revoked by the Board.

Respondent shall provide the Board with a current medication list of any medications taken on a scheduled or as-needed basis on forms issued by the Board within seven (7) days of the date of entry of this Consent Order, as well as at the request of the Board or the Board's representative. The Respondent shall provide the Board or the Board's representative with an updated this list within forty-eight (48) hours of any change in these medications

8. Individual Psychotherapy. Respondent shall engage in individual psychotherapy and comply with the recommendations of his treating professional until that treating professional certifies in writing to the Board that such counseling is no longer necessary. Respondent shall provide a copy of his Initial Assessment Abstract, dated November 9, 2015, and completed by Andrew Nuss, MA, LCMHC, to his treating professional.

Respondent shall authorize Respondent's treating professional to submit to the Board **quarterly** reports on forms issued by the Board. Respondent shall authorize Respondent's treating professional to provide all information requested by the Nursing Board, either orally or in writing, at any time during the period this Consent Order is in effect.

9. Notification to Employers/Nursing School. Respondent shall provide a copy of this Stipulation and Consent Order to all employers in any current or future setting in which Respondent practices as a nurse and inform them of Respondent's conditional license status. Within ten (10) days of the date of entry of this Consent Order or of any subsequent nursing employment, Respondent shall cause Respondent's immediate supervisor to submit to the Board an employer agreement form approved by the Board, acknowledging receipt of the Stipulation and Consent Order and the ability to comply with the conditions in the Consent Order.

In the event Respondent is attending a nursing program which has a clinical portion that involves actual patient care, Respondent shall provide a copy of the Stipulation and Consent Order to the Program Director. Respondent shall cause the Program Director to submit to the Board a nursing program agreement form approved by the Board, acknowledging receipt of the Stipulation and Consent Order and the ability of the program to comply with the conditions in the Consent Order during clinical experience.

10. Reports from Employers/Program Director. Within one (1) month of the date of reinstatement or within one (1) month of the commencement of nursing employment and **monthly** thereafter, Respondent shall cause every nursing employer Respondent has worked for during the month to submit to the Board an evaluation of Respondent's work performance and attendance during that month. Moreover, on a

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quarterly basis, these reports shall include the results of the employer's medication audits of Respondent's medication administration and practices. In the event Respondent is attending a nursing program, Respondent shall cause the Program Director to submit to the Board, on a monthly basis, a written evaluation of Respondent's performance and attendance. These reports shall be submitted in writing on forms issued by the Board. All employer reports shall indicate satisfactory performance (ie., consistently meeting all standards of nursing practice) and attendance.

11. Practice Under Supervision. Respondent shall practice as a nurse only in a setting where Respondent has on-site supervision for the entire shift by a licensed registered nurse that is in good standing with the Board.
12. Types of Employment Prohibited. Respondent shall not work in a supervisory role. Respondent shall not work for a nurse registry, traveling nurse agency, float-pool, home health care agency, temporary nursing employment agency, or as a private duty nurse or personal care provider requiring a nursing or nursing assistant license during the effective period of this Consent Order.
13. Interview with the Board or its Designee. Respondent shall appear in person for interviews with the Board or its designee upon request.
14. Out-of-State Practice. Before any out-of-state practice can be credited toward fulfillment of these terms and conditions, Respondent shall first obtain approval from the Board. The Board will approve out-of-state nursing practice so long as Respondent can still comply with the provisions of this Consent Order. If Respondent receives discipline on a nursing license held in another state during the conditioned period, Respondent must inform the Board of such, in writing, within ten (10) days of receiving such discipline.
15. Notification of Place of Employment/Personal Address/Telephone Number. Within ten (10) days of the date of entry of this Consent Order, Respondent shall notify the Board, in writing, of Respondent's current place of employment, personal address, and telephone number. Respondent shall further notify the Board, in writing, within forty-eight (48) hours of any change in employment (including resignation or termination), personal address, or telephone number.
16. Notification to Other States. In the event that Respondent is licensed in nursing in any other state(s), Respondent must inform the nursing licensing board of the state(s) in which Respondent is licensed of the conditional status of Respondent's Vermont nursing license within thirty (30) days of the date of entry of this Order.
17. License Renewal. This Order does not automatically extend the license and Respondent must comply with the requirements for license renewal.

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18. Release of Information Forms. This Order requires Respondent to authorize drug and/or alcohol treatment providers to report information in verbal and/or written format and/or to discuss Respondent and any and all treatment rendered to Respondent for drugs and/or alcohol with the Board or its designee. Any and all of this information may be provided to the Office of Professional Regulation investigators, and that the information may be used for further prosecutions if so warranted or if the Office of Professional Regulation determines that said information violates the terms of this Order or any rules or laws governing the profession of nursing.

Respondent is entitled to revoke this consent at any time. However, any revocation shall be considered a violation of this Order. This consent expires when the conditions are removed from Respondent's nursing license.

This Stipulation and Consent Order shall itself constitute a valid written consent pursuant to the requirements of 42 C.F.R. § 2.31. Respondent understands that Respondent's treatment provider may require Respondent's to sign a separate and distinct consent meeting the requirements of 42 C.F.R. § 2.31.

19. Costs. Respondent shall bear all costs of complying with this Consent Order.
20. Violation of this Order. If Respondent violates this Order the Board, after giving Respondent notice and an opportunity to be heard, may rescind or modify this Order and impose additional appropriate disciplinary actions. If a complaint of unprofessional conduct is made against Respondent during the term of this Order, this Order shall be automatically extended until the unprofessional conduct matter is concluded.
21. Completion of Conditional License Period. After the conditional license period, the Respondent may petition the Board to remove any and all conditions on his license. The Respondent must present proof that he has fully complied with the terms of this Order. The Respondent must also present proof of successful substance abuse rehabilitation and he must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Board, that he poses no danger to the public or the practice of nursing and that he can safely and competently perform the duties of a licensed nurse.
- B. Notwithstanding any provision above, the Respondent must continue to meet all Board requirements for maintaining a license, license renewal and license reinstatement.
- C. This Stipulation and Consent Order is a matter of public record and may be reported to other licensing authorities as provided in 3 V.S.A. §129(a).
- D. This Stipulation and Consent Order will remain part of Respondent's licensing file and may be used for purposes of determining sanctions in any future disciplinary matter.

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AGREED TO:

Dated: 12/8/15

STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE

By: Elizabeth A. Jarvis
State Prosecuting Attorney

ERNEST J. LUIKART
RESPONDENT

Dated: 12/7/2015

By: Ernest J. Luikart
Ernest J. Luikart

APPROVED AS TO FORM ONLY:

Dated: 12/7/15

DEVIN MCLAUGHLIN, ESQ.
ATTORNEY FOR RESPONDENT

By: Devin McLaughlin, Esq.
Devin McLaughlin, Esq.

APPROVED AND SO ORDERED:

Dated: 12/14/15

Date of Entry: 12/15/15

VERMONT BOARD OF NURSING

By: Jarvis Carr
Chairperson

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