

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

IN RE:
JUDITH STILWELL
License No. 026.0025942

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Docket No. 2009-590 (NU)

STIPULATION AND CONSENT ORDER

STIPULATION

NOW COME the State of Vermont, by and through State Prosecuting Attorney S. Lauren Hibbert, and the Respondent, Judith Stilwell, RN, 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; the Administrative Rules of the Board of Nursing (the "ARBN"); and the Rules of the Office of Professional Regulation.

Statement of Facts

2. Judith Stilwell (the "Respondent") of Alburg, Vermont is licensed by the State of Vermont as a Registered Nurse under license number 026.0025942. This license was originally issued on or about September 26, 2000 and expires on March 31, 2013.
3. At all times relevant, Respondent was employed as a clinical instructor at Vermont Technical College ("VTC"), located in Randolph Center, Vermont, and was working in that capacity at Franklin County Rehab Center (the "FCRC"), located in St. Albans, Vermont.
4. On or about November 11, 2009, the Office of Professional Regulation received a Report of Unprofessional Conduct alleging that on or about October 6, 2009, the Respondent failed to adequately supervise clinical students which caused them to be exposed to a MRSA patient thereby endangering themselves and other patients.
5. On or about June 3, 2010, in an interview with State Investigator Karl Packer, K.H., who is the Vermont Technical College Site Director, stated that the Respondent was responsible for training students at FCRC. K.H. states that while the Respondent was working at FCRC she was required to follow the policies and procedures of FCRC.

6. On or about June 4, 2010, in an interview with State Investigator Karl Packer, Registered Nurse P.E. stated that on or about November 11, 2009 she observed the Respondent and clinical students on a wing that they do not typically work on. She further states that she saw two clinical students taking vital signs of a resident who had MRSA without wearing personal protective equipment. P.E. stated that there was a bright orange sign outside the door that stated that MRSA was present and that personal protective equipment was required.
7. On or about September 20, 2010, in an interview with State Investigator Karl Packer, C.R. stated that she was one of the nursing students involved in the incident on or about November 11, 2009 and that she had not seen the precaution signs outside of the patient's room.
8. On or about September 17, 2010, in an interview with Investigator Packer, T.G. stated that she was one of the nursing students involved in the incident on or about November 11, 2009 and that she had not seen the precaution signs outside of the patient's room. T.G. stated that the Respondent did not review any of the residents' charts with the students before they started to administer care.
9. On or about September 30, 2010, in an interview with Investigator Packer, the Respondent stated that on or about November 11, 2009 she did not know her students were going to treat residents who had MRSA, she did not have the opportunity to review the charts for the residents, nor did she see the sign outside the resident's room until after the students were in the room.
10. Respondent has committed unprofessional conduct because when she did not instruct her clinical students to use personal protective equipment while treating a patient with MRSA she did not conform to essential standards of suitable care; and therefore, she failed to comply with the rules governing the practice of profession.

Charges

11. 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. 26 V.S.A. § 1582(a)(3) (Is unable to practice nursing competently by reason of any cause) which includes performing unsafe or unacceptable patient care pursuant to ARBN Chapter 4, Subchapter 4, Rule II(B)(1); and failing to conform to the essential standards of acceptable and prevailing nursing practice pursuant to ARBN Chapter 4, Subchapter 4, Rule II(B)(2);
 - b. 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); and

- c. 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).

Understandings

12. Respondent admits the facts above are true and that the conditions below are necessary to protect the public.
13. 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.
14. Respondent specifically waives any claims that any disclosures made to the full Board during its review of this agreement have prejudiced her rights to a fair and impartial hearing in future hearings if this agreement is not accepted by the Board.
15. Respondent has read and reviewed this entire document and agrees that it contains the entire agreement between the parties.
16. Respondent is not under the influence of any drugs or alcohol at the time she signs this Stipulation and Consent Order.
17. 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.
18. Respondent voluntarily waives her right to a contested hearing before the Board of Nursing and waives any right to appeal from this Stipulation and Consent Order.
19. 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. A. The Board of Nursing hereby **CONDITIONS** the Respondent's license to practice nursing for six (6) months from the date of entry below. The conditions are as follows:

- (1) Re-issue of License.

Upon the imposition of these conditions, Respondent shall be issued a license labeled "conditioned."

(2) Length of Time 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 six (6) months of supervised nursing practice in which she works at least forty (40) hours every two (2) weeks as a nurse. Part time hours of less than forty (40) hours every two (2) weeks shall be credited on a prorated basis. The Respondent shall be prohibited from working more than forty (40) hours per week during the conditioned period.

(3) Infection Control Course.

Respondent must successfully complete (i.e., receive a passing grade, if applicable) a infection control course with prior approval by the Board or its designee, and then submit written documentation of completion (certificate of completion, etc.) to verify the same to the satisfaction of the Board or its designee. This course must be completed within ninety (90) days of the date of entry of this Stipulation and Consent Order.

(4) Risk Management Course.

Respondent must successfully complete (i.e., receive a passing grade, if applicable) a risk management course with prior approval by the Board or its designee, and then submit written documentation of completion (certificate of completion, etc.) to verify the same to the satisfaction of the Board or its designee. This course must be completed within ninety (90) days of the date of entry of this Stipulation and Consent Order.

(5) 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 the 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.

(6) Reports from Employers/Program Directors.

Within one (1) month of the date of entry of this Order or within one (1) month of the commencement of nursing employment and monthly thereafter, Respondent shall cause every nursing employer the Respondent has worked for during the month to submit to the Board an evaluation of Respondent's work performance and attendance during that month.

These reports shall be submitted in writing on forms issued by the Board. All employer reports shall indicate satisfactory performance (i.e., consistently meeting all standards of nursing practice) and attendance.

In the event the 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 her performance and attendance. These reports shall be submitted in writing on forms issued by the Board. All nursing program reports shall indicate satisfactory performance (i.e., consistently meeting all standards of nursing practice) and attendance.

(7) Practice Under Supervision.

Respondent shall practice nursing only in a setting where Respondent has direct supervision for the entire shift by a registered nurse that is licensed and in good standing with the Board.

(8) 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.

(9) 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 prior to Respondent practicing nursing outside the State of Vermont. If Respondent fails to receive such approval before practicing nursing outside the State of Vermont, none of the time spent practicing nursing out-of-state will be credited toward the fulfillment of the terms and conditions of this Consent Order. The Board will approve out-of-state nursing practice so long as the Respondent can still comply with the provisions of this Consent Order.

If the Respondent receives discipline on a nursing license held in another state during the conditioned period, the Respondent must inform the Board of such, in writing, within ten (10) days of receiving such discipline.

(10) 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 her 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.

(11) Notification to Other States.

In the event that the Respondent is licensed in nursing in any other state(s), she must inform the nursing licensing board of the state(s) in which the Respondent is licensed of the conditional status of her Vermont nursing license within thirty (30) days of the date of entry of this Order. If the Respondent fails to provide such notification, it will be considered a violation of this Order.

(12) License Renewal.

If the Respondent's license expires while this Order is still in effect, this Order does not automatically extend the license. In that situation, in order to continue to practice as a nurse, the Respondent must timely apply for renewal, pay the applicable fee and demonstrate that she has otherwise complied with the requirements for license renewal.

(13) Costs.

The Respondent shall bear all costs of complying with this Consent Order.

(14) Violation of this Order.

If the Respondent violates the terms of this Order in any respect, the Board, after giving the 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 the Respondent during the term of this Order, this Order shall be automatically extended until the unprofessional conduct matter is concluded.

(15) Completion of Conditional License Period.

After the conditional license period, the Respondent may petition the Board to remove any and all conditions on her license. The Respondent must present proof that she has fully complied with the terms of this Order.

- B. While under the conditions of this Stipulation and Consent Order the Respondent may request in writing that her license status be changed to INACTIVE – CONDITIONED. If, subsequently, the Respondent requests her license status to be changed to active she will be subject to the conditions in this order.
- C. The Respondent must continue to meet all Nursing Board requirements for maintaining a license, license renewal and license reinstatement.
- D. 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).
- E. 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.

AGREED TO:

Dated: 6/7/11

STATE OF VERMONT
SECRETARY OF STATE

By: 

S. Lauren Hibbert
State Prosecuting Attorney

JUDITH STILWELL
RESPONDENT

Dated: 6/7/11

By: Judith Stilwell
Judith Stilwell

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

ATTORNEY FOR RESPONDENT

Dated: 6/7/11

By: Richard Cassidy, Esq.
Richard Cassidy, Esq.

APPROVED AND SO ORDERED: VERMONT BOARD OF NURSING

Dated: 6-13-11

By: Ellen Ruff
Chairperson

Date of Entry: 6/14/11
mustilwell@tip