

BEFORE THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING

IN RE: **KIM S. LOWE COPELAND, R.N.**  
**License Number: 0001-151150**  
**Case Number: 172665**

**RATIFICATION AND ORDER**

On January 25, 2017, a panel of the Board met to receive and act upon the Recommended Decision of the Agency Subordinate. Kim S. Lowe Copeland, R.N., was not present nor was she represented by legal counsel.

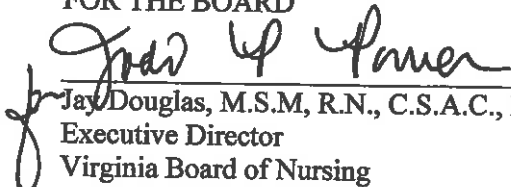
In consideration whereof, the Board of Nursing ACCEPTS the attached Recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law of the Agency Subordinate and ADOPTS the Recommended Order in its entirety.

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 54.1-2400.2, the signed original of this Order shall remain in the custody of the Department of Health Professions as a public record, and shall be made available for public inspection and copying upon request.

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 54.1-2400.2(K), the Board considered whether to disclose or not disclose Ms. Copeland's health records or health services.

Since Ms. Copeland failed to appear at the informal conference, this Order shall be considered final. Ms. Copeland has the right to appeal this Order directly to the appropriate Virginia circuit court. As provided by Rule 2A:2 of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Ms. Copeland has thirty days from the date of service (the date she actually received this decision or the date it was mailed to her, whichever occurred first) within which to appeal this decision by filing a Notice of Appeal with Jay P. Douglas, Executive Director, Board of Nursing, at Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300, Richmond, Virginia 23233. In the event that this decision is served by mail, three days are added to that period.

FOR THE BOARD

  
Jay Douglas, M.S.M, R.N., C.S.A.C., F.R.E.  
Executive Director  
Virginia Board of Nursing

**Certified True Copy**

By   
Virginia Board of Nursing

ENTERED AND MAILED ON:

February 2, 2017

**BEFORE THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING**

**IN RE: KIM S. LOWE COPELAND, R.N.**  
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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION OF AGENCY SUBORDINATE**

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**Jurisdiction and Procedural History**

Pursuant to Virginia Code §§ 2.2-4019 and 54.1-2400(10), Judith Piersall, R.N., B.S.N., serving as Agency Subordinate of the Virginia Board of Nursing ("Board"), held an informal conference on December 1, 2016 in Henrico County, Virginia, to inquire into evidence that Kim S. Lowe Copeland, R.N., may have violated certain laws and regulations governing the practice of professional nursing in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Ms. Copeland did not appear at this proceeding and was not represented by legal counsel.

Upon consideration of the evidence, the Agency Subordinate makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and recommends that the Board adopt the following Order.

**Notice**

By letter dated November 2, 2016, the Board sent a Notice of Informal Conference ("Notice") to Ms. Copeland notifying her that an informal conference would be held on December 1, 2016. The Notice was sent by certified and first class mail to the legal address of record on file with the Board. The receipt for the Notice sent via certified mail was signed by a third party and returned to the Board office on November 22, 2016. The Notice sent via first-class mail was not returned to the Board office. Accordingly, the Agency Subordinate concluded that adequate notice was provided to Ms. Copeland and the informal conference proceeded in her absence.

### Recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

1. Kim S. Lowe Copeland, R.N., was issued License Number 0001-151150 to practice professional nursing on October 29, 1996, which expired on August 31, 2016. At all times relevant to the findings herein, said license was in full force and effect or was eligible for renewal. Her primary state of residence is Virginia.
2. Ms. Copeland violated Virginia Code § 54.1-3007(6) in that she is unsafe to practice professional nursing due to substance abuse and mental illness, as evidenced by the following:
  - a. On March 3, 2016, Ms. Copeland was hospitalized at Carilion Roanoke Medical Center (“CRMH”), Roanoke, Virginia, following an overdose of Xanax, heroin, crack cocaine, methamphetamines, and marijuana.
  - b. From March 7, 2016, to March 9, 2016, Ms. Copeland was hospitalized in the psychiatric unit of CRMH, where her discharge diagnoses included major depressive disorder, recurrent, without psychotic features, cocaine use disorder, moderate, alcohol use disorder, severe, and benzodiazepine use disorder, moderate.
  - c. From March 20, 2015, to April 1, 2015, Ms. Copeland was hospitalized at Carilion St. Albans Hospital, where her discharge diagnoses included alcohol abuse/dependence, substance induced mood disorder, opiate abuse/dependence in remission, benzodiazepine abuse/dependence, and personality disorder “NOS with cluster B traits.”
  - d. By her own admission, Ms. Copeland has abused alcohol, at one point consuming up to six bottles of wine per day, and opiates since about 2002 to deal with pain from an injury and to deal with personal challenges, smokes marijuana on a regular basis and does not consider this a “big deal.” Ms. Copeland uses Suboxone that is prescribed for her boyfriend. Ms. Copeland has now, and has had for several years, an implanted pain pump.

e. A physician's assistant who treated Ms. Copeland on September 6, 2016, stated to an investigator for the Department of Health Professions that Ms. Copeland was not safe to practice without substance abuse treatment.

f. By her own admission, Ms. Copeland was impaired by drugs when she was arrested for driving under the influence on May 4, 2016.

g. On May 7, 2016, Ms. Copeland was admitted to the emergency department of CRMH, where she was diagnosed with cocaine abuse, uncomplicated, and opioid abuse, uncomplicated.

3. Ms. Copeland violated Virginia Code § 54.1-3007(5) and (6) in that during the course of her employment with Salem Health and Rehabilitation Center, Salem, Virginia, on June 22, 2013, Ms. Copeland was observed to be asleep while on duty.

4. Pursuant to Virginia Code § 54.1-2400.2(K), the Board considered whether to disclose or not disclose Ms. Copeland's health records or health services.

#### **Recommended Order**

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Agency Subordinate recommends that the Board issue an Order as follows:

1. The right of Kim S. Lowe Copeland, R.N., to renew her license to practice professional nursing in the Commonwealth of Virginia is INDEFINITELY SUSPENDED for a period of not less than two years from date of entry of this Order.

2. The license of Kim S. Lowe Copeland, R.N., will be recorded as SUSPENDED.

3. This suspension applies to any multistate privilege to practice professional nursing.

4. Should Kim S. Lowe Copeland, R.N., seek reinstatement of her license, an administrative proceeding shall be convened to consider such application. At such time, the burden shall be on Ms. Copeland to demonstrate that she is safe and competent to return to the practice of professional nursing. Ms. Copeland shall be responsible for any fees that may be required for the reinstatement and/or renewal of the license prior to issuance of the license to resume practice.

Reviewed and approved on January 8, 2017  
By Judith Piersall, R.N., B.S.N.  
Agency Subordinate

**Certified True Copy**

By   
Virginia Board of Nursing