

**VIRGINIA:**

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING**

**IN RE: MELANNIE KASSOFF, R.N.  
License No.: 0001-082656**

**ORDER**

In accordance with §§ 2.2-4019, 2.2-4021 and 54.1-2400(10) of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended ("Code"), an informal conference was conducted on behalf of the Board of Nursing ("Board") on December 4, 2014 in Henrico County, Virginia. Ms. Kassoff was not present nor was she represented by legal counsel. Jane Elliott, R.N., Ph.D., serving as Agency Subordinate for the Board, submitted a Recommended Decision for consideration.

On January 28, 2015, a quorum of the Board met to receive and act upon the Recommended Decision of the Agency Subordinate. Ms. Kassoff was not present nor was she represented by legal counsel.

Based upon its review of the Recommended Decision of the Agency Subordinate, the Board makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and issues the following Order.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Melannie Kassoff, R.N., was issued License No. 0001-082656 to practice professional nursing in Virginia on September 1, 1981. Said license is set to expire on January 31, 2016. Ms. Kassoff's primary state of residence is Virginia.
2. By letter dated November 10, 2014, the Board of Nursing sent a Notice of Informal Conference ("Notice") to Ms. Kassoff notifying her that an informal conference would be held on December 4, 2014. The Notice was sent by certified and first class mail to 4750 Sussex Court, Apt. L., Roanoke, Virginia, 24018, the address of record on file with the Board of Nursing. Neither the first class mail nor the certified mail had been returned to the Board office as of December 4, 2014. Additionally,

contact made with the Board by Ms. Kassoff prior to the hearing indicated she was aware of the hearing date and time. The Agency Subordinate concluded that adequate notice was provided to Ms. Kassoff and the informal conference proceeded in her absence.

3. On May 27, 2014, Ms. Kassoff was admitted to Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, Roanoke, Virginia, after she was found unresponsive in her apartment by a neighbor. Ms. Kassoff was admitted for a suspected suicide attempt in which she had overdosed on Adderall, Halcion and Seroquel. Ms. Kassoff was treated for severe sepsis secondary to aspiration pneumonia, hypoxic respiratory failure, acute hepatitis and hepatic failure, acute encephalopathy, failure to thrive and malnutrition related to poor compliance with ulcerative colitis treatment. She was intubated from May 28, 2014, to June 2, 2014. A drug screen was positive for benzodiazepines and opiates. Ms. Kassoff was discharged on June 3, 2014, to Carilion Clinic Saint Albans Hospital (“Saint Albans”), Christiansburg, Virginia, for an evaluation and psychiatric treatment.

4. At her discharge from Saint Albans on June 5, 2014, Ms. Kassoff was diagnosed with substance induced mood disorder, cognitive disorder NOS, major depression in partial relapse, recent acute encephalopathy, polysubstance abuse and alcohol dependence, questionable if in remission, and personality disorder NOS with cluster B traits. Ms. Kassoff’s discharge summary indicated she denied the suicide attempt and stated she was trying to get “high”.

5. On June 8, 2014, Ms. Kassoff was admitted to Lewis Gale Medical Center, Roanoke, Virginia accompanied by the police. Ms. Kassoff had arrived at her workplace, Lewis Gale Center for Behavioral Health, with an altered mental status and slurred speech and she was exhibiting odd behaviors. Ms. Kassoff was discharged to Saint Albans on June 10, 2014, for further inpatient psychiatric treatment. Ms. Kassoff was diagnosed with suffering from an overdose of narcotics and benzodiazepines, respiratory failure secondary to aspiration pneumonia, aspiration pneumonia with

sepsis, history of alcohol and IV drug use, severe iron deficiency and anemia, multivitamin deficiency and malnutrition.

6. On June 10, 2014, Ms. Kassoff was admitted to Saint Albans, following her discharge from Lewis Gale Medical Center. At discharge on June 18, 2014, Ms. Kassoff was noted to have a diagnosis of recurrent major depression, alcohol dependence in remission, opiate and benzodiazepine abuse, and personality disorder, NOS with cluster B traits. While at Saint Albans Ms. Kassoff admitted to prior suicide attempts and reported that she was experiencing opiate withdrawals.

7. On July 25, 2014, Ms. Kassoff's psychiatrist became concerned after she missed an appointment. Her psychiatrist requested the police and emergency services respond to her apartment where Ms. Kassoff was found unresponsive on her apartment floor. Ms. Kassoff was admitted to Lewis Gale Medical Center; during her admission she indicated she had taken more medicine than she was supposed to. Ms. Kassoff also tested positive on a urine drug screen for opiates.

8. On August 1, 2014, Ms. Kassoff arrived for an appointment at Carilion Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, Roanoke, Virginia, and appeared confused. The facility indicated they suspected the confusion was a result of substance abuse. Ms. Kassoff was admitted to Carilion Rehabilitation and discharged on August 7, 2014. At that time Ms. Kassoff was prescribed Suboxone (buprenorphine and naloxone, Schedule III) and had a diagnosis of recurrent depression, opiate/alcohol dependence and chronic pain.

9. During an interview with an investigator with the Department of Health Professions on September 22, 2014, Ms. Kassoff's psychiatrist at Carilion Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine indicated she was physically very ill. He reported Ms. Kassoff was weak and emaciated and was not physically able to work at that time.

10. During an interview with an investigator for the Virginia Department of Health

Professions, Ms. Kassoff reported that she attended weekly group therapy and was prescribed Prozac and Suboxone. Additionally, Ms. Kassoff indicated that she attended AA meetings and had a sponsor.

### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Findings of Facts Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 constitute a violation of §54.1-3007(6) of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

### ORDER

WHEREFORE, it is hereby ORDERED as follows:


1. License No. 0001082656 of Melannie Kassoff, R.N., is INDEFINITELY SUSPENDED.
2. The license will be recorded as suspended and no longer current.
3. At such time as Ms. Kassoff shall petition the Board for reinstatement of her license, an administrative proceeding will be convened to determine whether she is capable of resuming the safe and competent practice of nursing. Ms. Kassoff shall be responsible for any fees that may be required for the reinstatement and renewal of the license prior to issuance of the license to resume practice.
4. This suspension applies to any multistate privilege to practice nursing.

Pursuant to § 54.1-2400.2 of the Code, 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.

Since Ms. Kassoff failed to appear at the informal conference, this Order shall be considered final. Ms. Kassoff 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. Kassoff has thirty (30) 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, M.S.M., R.N.,

C.S.A.C., F.R.E., 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 (3) days are added to that period.

FOR THE BOARD

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

Entered: February 4, 2015

Certified True Copy

By   
Virginia Board Of Nursing