

BEFORE THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING

IN RE: PAULA SUSAN SPARROW HIGH, R.N.
License Number: 0001-188504
Case Number: 177608

ORDER

JURISDICTION AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Pursuant to Virginia Code §§ 2.2-4020, 2.2-4024(F), and 54.1-2400(11), a panel of the Virginia Board of Nursing (“Board”) held a formal administrative hearing on September 18, 2017, in Henrico County, Virginia, to inquire into evidence that Paula S. High, R.N., may have violated certain laws and regulations governing the practice of professional nursing in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Paula Susan Sparrow High, R.N., appeared at this proceeding and was not represented by legal counsel.

NOTICE

By letter dated April 19, 2017, the Board sent a Notice of Formal Hearing (“Notice”) to Ms. High notifying her that a formal administrative hearing would be held on May 18, 2017. The Notice was sent by certified and first class mail to the legal address of record on file with the Board. Ms. High requested and received a continuance. By letter dated August 11, 2017, the Board sent an Amended Notice to Ms. High notifying her that the formal administrative hearing would be held on September 18, 2017.

Upon consideration of the evidence, the Board adopts the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and issues the Order contained herein.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Paula Susan Sparrow High, R.N., was issued License Number 0001-188504 to practice professional nursing on December 23, 2003, which was suspended on November 30, 2016. Her primary state of residence is West Virginia. Ms. High also holds License Number R089716 to practice professional nursing in Maryland, which expired on November 28, 2011 and License Number 63689 to practice professional nursing in West Virginia, which expired on October 31, 2011.
2. By Order of the Department of Health Professions (“DHP”) entered June 25, 2013, Ms. High’s license was mandatorily suspended pursuant to Virginia Code § 54.1-2409. By Order of the Board entered August 5, 2014, the Board reinstated Ms. High’s license to practice professional nursing, indefinitely suspended her license and stayed the suspension contingent upon her remaining in compliance with all terms and conditions of the Health Practitioners’ Monitoring Program (“HPMP”), which she entered due to substance abuse.
3. On November 18, 2016, Ms. High was dismissed from the HPMP due to noncompliance. Specifically:
 - a. On December 3, 2015, July 29, 2016, August 17, 2016 and September 29, 2016, Ms. High tested positive for ethanol and/or EtS. On September 9, 2016, Ms. High admitted to relapsing on alcohol in August 2016.
 - b. Ms. High failed to comply with the toxicology screening program in that she missed drug screens on September 26, 2016, and October 17 and 25, 2016, and stopped calling the drug screen test line on October 27, 2016.
 - c. Ms. High failed to enter and complete treatment as recommended.
4. Ms. High told the Board that she is an alcoholic and should not “play with fire.” Nonetheless, she reported that she last drank alcohol two days before the hearing. She stated aside from

that, she thought she had last consumed alcohol in May 2017. Despite her continuing to consume alcohol, she told the Board that if an alcoholic begins to drink again, then the amount and frequency will increase. Ms. High told the DHP investigator that she did not believe she needed treatment because she has been sober for four years.

5. Ms. High testified that she attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings at least twice a week, but that she does not currently have a sponsor.
6. Ms. High testified that she has not practiced nursing since 2013.
7. Ms. High currently is under medical care and is taking the prescription medications Embeda (morphine/naltrexone, C-II), Effexor and Prilosec.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Finding of Fact No. 3 constitutes a violation of Virginia Code § 54.1-3007(6) and Term Number 1 of the Board Order entered August 5, 2014.
2. Pursuant to Virginia Code § 54.1-2400.2(K), the Board considered whether to disclose or not disclose Ms. High's health records or health services.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Virginia Board of Nursing hereby ORDERS as follows:


1. Paula Susan Sparrow High, R.N., is REPRIMANDED.
2. The license issued to Paula Susan Sparrow High, R.N., to practice professional nursing in the Commonwealth of Virginia is CONTINUED on INDEFINITE SUSPENSION for a period of not less than two years from the date of entry of this Order.
3. The license of Ms. High will be recorded as SUSPENDED.
4. This suspension applies to any multistate privilege to practice professional nursing.

October 12, 2017

5. Should Ms. High seek reinstatement of her license, an administrative proceeding shall be convened to consider such application. At such time, the burden shall be on Ms. High to demonstrate that she is safe and competent to return to the practice of professional nursing. Ms. High 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.

Pursuant to Virginia Code §§ 2.2-4023 and 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.

FOR THE BOARD



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

ENTERED AND MAILED ON:

October 12th, 2017

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

As provided by Rule 2A:2 of the Supreme Court of Virginia, you have 30 days from the date you are served with this Order in which to appeal this decision by filing a Notice of Appeal with Jay Douglas, M.S.M, R.N., C.S.A.C., F.R.E., Executive Director, Board of Nursing, 9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300, Henrico, Virginia 23233. The service date shall be defined as the date you actually received this decision or the date it was mailed to you, whichever occurred first. In the event this decision is served upon you by mail, three days are added to that period.

Certified True Copy

By Abraham
Virginia Board Of Nursing