

BEFORE THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING

IN RE: SANDRA ELAINE HEFLIN THOMAS, R.N.
License Number: 0001-138069
Case Number: 171389

CONSENT ORDER

JURISDICTION AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Virginia Board of Nursing ("Board") and Sandra Elaine Heflin Thomas, R.N., as evidenced by their signatures hereto, in lieu of proceeding to an informal conference, enter into the following Consent Order affecting Ms. Thomas's license to practice professional nursing in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Sandra Elaine Heflin Thomas, R.N. was issued License Number 0001-138069 to practice professional nursing on June 16, 1994, which is scheduled to expire on July 31, 2017. Her primary state of residence is Virginia.
2. By Consent Order of the Board entered on November 16, 2005, said license was indefinitely suspended as a result of Ms. Thomas' diversion of controlled substances and her dismissal from the Health Practitioners' Intervention Program ("HPIP") due to non-compliance.
3. By Order of the Board entered September 26, 2008, said license was reinstated contingent upon Ms. Thomas's entry into and compliance with the HPIP.
4. By Order of the Board entered March 5, 2014, Ms. Thomas was reprimanded following her dismissal from the Health Practitioners' Monitoring Program ("HPMP") for non-compliance for failing to complete treatment as recommended. Ms. Thomas was also released from the terms of the Board Order entered September 26, 2008.

5. Ms. Thomas violated Virginia Code § 54.1-3007(6) in that she is unsafe to practice professional nursing due to mental illness, as evidenced by the following:

a. From December 28, 2015 to December 30, 2015, Ms. Thomas was admitted under a temporary detention order to CJW Medical Center's Tucker Pavilion, Richmond, Virginia, for inpatient psychiatric treatment for suicidal ideation. Ms. Thomas's drug screen upon admission was positive for high opiates, with an acetaminophen level of 3.7. Her discharge diagnosis was mood disorder, depressed, substance use disorder, opiates.

b. From December 30, 2015 to January 27, 2016, Ms. Thomas received treatment at the Williamsville Wellness Center, Hanover, Virginia, where she was diagnosed at discharge with opioid use disorder, severe, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder with dissociative symptoms.

c. Ms. Thomas's Prescription Monitoring Program records reveal that from February 17, 2014 to March 22, 2016, Ms. Thomas filled 12 oxycodone (C-II) prescriptions (845 pills), 10 oxycontin (C-II) prescriptions (240 pills), 5 hydrocodone (C-II) prescriptions (122.06 pills), 2 endocet (C-II) prescriptions (50 pills), and four tramadol (C-IV) prescriptions (115 pills), through seven different pharmacies.

6. Ms. Thomas is currently unemployed after having resigned from her employment as the Director of Nursing with Hand n' Heart Home Care, Mechanicsville, Virginia, in January 2016.

7. In an email to the investigator for the Department of Health Professions, dated February 22, 2016, Ms. Thomas indicated that she is willing to participate in the HPMP if needed.

CONSENT

Sandra Elaine Heflin Thomas, R.N., by affixing her signature to this Consent Order, agrees to the following:

1. I have been advised to seek advice of counsel prior to signing this document;
2. I am fully aware that without my consent, no legal action can be taken against me or my license except pursuant to the Virginia Administrative Process Act, Virginia Code § 2.2-4000 *et seq.*;
3. I acknowledge that I have the following rights, among others: the right to an informal fact-finding conference before the Board; and the right to representation by counsel;
4. I waive my right to an informal conference;
5. I admit to the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law contained herein and waive my right to contest such Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and any sanction imposed hereunder in any future judicial or administrative proceeding in which the Board is a party;
6. I consent to the entry of the following Order affecting my licensure to practice professional nursing in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

ORDER

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

1. The license of Sandra Elaine Heflin Thomas, R.N., to practice professional nursing is INDEFINITELY SUSPENDED.
2. The license will be recorded as suspended.
3. This suspension applies to any multistate privilege to practice professional nursing.
4. Should Sandra Elaine Heflin Thomas, 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. Thomas to demonstrate that she is safe and competent to return to the practice of professional nursing. Ms. Thomas 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.

5. The suspension shall be STAYED upon proof of Ms. Thomas's entry into a Contract with the Virginia Health Practitioners' Monitoring Program ("HPMP") within 60 days of the date of entry of this Order.

6. Upon stay of the suspension, Sandra Elaine Heflin Thomas, R.N., shall comply with all terms and conditions of the HPMP for the period specified by the HPMP.

7. Upon receipt of evidence of Ms. Thomas's participation in and successful completion of the terms specified by the HPMP, the Board, at its discretion, may waive Ms. Thomas's appearance before the Board and conduct an administrative review of this matter, at which time she may be issued an unrestricted license.

8. This Order is applicable to Ms. Thomas's multistate licensure privileges, if any, to practice professional nursing. For the duration of this Order, Ms. Thomas shall not work outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia pursuant to a multistate licensure privilege without the written permission of the Virginia Board of Nursing and the Board of Nursing in the party state where she seeks to work. Any requests for out of state employment should be directed, in writing, to the Executive Director of the Board.

9. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the stay of suspension shall result in the immediate rescission of the stay of suspension of the license of Sandra Elaine Heflin Thomas, R.N., and the license shall be recorded as suspended. After any rescission of the stay of suspension, Ms. Thomas may, within 33 days of the effective date of the rescission, request a formal administrative hearing before the Board.

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.

Case # 171389

FEB 07 2017

DHP

FOR THE BOARD

Joyce A. Hahn

Joyce A. Hahn, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FNAP
President
Virginia Board of Nursing

ENTERED: 3/21/17

SEEN AND AGREED TO:

Sandra Elaine Heflin Thomas RN
Sandra Elaine Heflin Thomas, RN.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY/CITY OF King William, TO WIT:

Subscribed and sworn to me, a notary public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia at large, on this
18th day of January, 2017.



Helene F. Rice
Notary Public

My commission expires: 6/30/2020

Registration No.: 7168251

Certified True Copy

By *[Signature]*
Virginia Board Of Nursing