

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING

**IN RE: PAULA COOK, R.N.
 License No.: 0001-122627**

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 August 29, 2013, in Henrico County, Virginia. Ms. Cook was not present and was not represented by legal counsel. Jane Elliott, R.N., Ph.D., serving as Agency Subordinate for the Board, submitted a Recommended Decision for consideration.

On November 19, 2013, a quorum of the Board met to receive and act upon the Recommended Decision of the Agency Subordinate. Ms. Cook 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. Paula Cook, R.N., was issued License No. 0001-122627 to practice professional nursing in Virginia on March 18, 1991. The license is scheduled to expire on May 31, 2014. Her primary state of residence is Virginia.
2. By letter dated August 2, 2013, the Virginia Board of Nursing sent a Notice of Informal Conference ("Notice") to Ms. Cook, notifying her that an informal conference would be held on August 29, 2013. The Notice was sent by certified and first class mail to P.O. Box 2007, Honaker, Virginia 24260, the address of record on file with the Board of Nursing. The Notice was also sent by certified and first class mail to 16033 Steinman Road, Abingdon, Virginia 24210, a secondary address. Both certified mail receipts were signed. The Notices sent by first class mail were not returned to the Board office. The

Agency Subordinate concluded that adequate notice was provided to Ms. Cook, and the informal conference proceeded in her absence.

3. During her employment at Johnston Memorial Hospital, Abingdon, Virginia, Paula Cook, R.N., stole a prescription pad used by hospitalists at the facility, and between April and October, 2012, she used the prescription pad to forge and obtain prescriptions for medications, including oxycodone (Schedule II), hydrocodone (Schedule II), phenergan, and ciprofloxacin, for herself and a family member.

4. Ms. Cook appeared before the Russell County Circuit Court and was arraigned on multiple felony charges on November 27, 2012. She was accorded First Offender status and the Court's sentencing was deferred until January 23, 2014. Her First Offender status was made contingent upon compliance with the Court's recommendation that she seek substance abuse treatment, and she was placed on supervised probation.

5. Ms. Cook signed a Participation Contract with the Health Practitioners' Monitoring Program ("HPMP") on November 28, 2012, in which she acknowledged that she may be unable to safely practice due to her reported history of substance abuse. On March 12, 2013, Ms. Cook was dismissed from the HPMP for failing to enter treatment for substance abuse as recommended. At the time of her dismissal from the HPMP, Ms. Cook's diagnosis included opioid abuse r/o opioid dependency. Ms. Cook told State Police that she had developed an addiction to Percocet (oxycodone, Schedule II).

6. Ms. Cook did not respond to the Department of Health Professions' Investigator's requests for an interview, and therefore the Board has no information regarding her current employment status.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Finding of Fact #3 constitutes a violation of § 54.1-3007(2), (5), and (6) of the Code, and 18 VAC 90-20-300(A)(2)(c) and (e) of the Regulations Governing the Practice of Nursing.
2. Finding of Fact #5 constitutes a violation of § 54.1-3007 (6) of the Code.

ORDER

WHEREFORE, it is hereby ORDERED as follows:

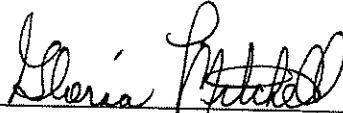
1. License No. 0001-122627 of Paula Cook, R.N., is INDEFINITELY SUSPENDED for a period of not less than two years and until such time as she can appear before the Board and demonstrate that she is able to resume the safe and competent practice of nursing.
2. The license will be recorded as suspended and no longer current.
3. At such time as Ms. Cook 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 professional nursing. Ms. Cook 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 professional 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. Cook failed to appear at the informal conference, this Order shall be considered final. Ms. Cook 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. Cook 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.

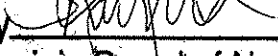
FOR THE BOARD:



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

Entered: November 25, 2013

Certified True Copy

By 
Virginia Board of Nursing