

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF PRACTICAL NURSE EXAMINERS  
131 AIRLINE DRIVE, SUITE 301  
METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70001-6266  
(504) 838-5791  
FAX (504) 838-5279  
www.lsbpne.com

In the matter of:

**Debra Thomas - respondent**  
**License #220684**

This cause having come to be heard at a formal hearing conducted at the board office on April 11, 2014 upon the complaint filed in this matter.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

During the formal hearing process, the following facts were confirmed:

1. The respondent was licensed as a practical nurse in the state of Louisiana on 10/9/02.
2. On 6/17/13, the respondent entered into an agreement with the board issuing a letter of reprimand on her practical nursing license. The respondent falsified her 2013 renewal application by not reporting that she had been arrested in December of 2012 for the charge of false swearing against the public health.
3. The board received a report indicating that on 9/25/13, the respondent was on duty as a licensed practical nurse at Covenant Nursing Home. The respondent passed out and was taken to the emergency room at Ochsner. As part of a medical exam, a blood alcohol level was drawn. The result was 0.251%. (Exhibits E4-E6)
4. The board received records from Covenant Nursing Home indicating that the respondent was scheduled to arrive at 10:45 pm for her shift, but that she did not arrive until after 1:00 am. She was witnessed by another nurse and several CNAs crying and complaining that she was tired and feeling funny. She was observed with unsteady posture and her clothes in disarray. She was told to lie down but she chose to sit in a station chair. Soon after, the respondent was found unconscious in the Annex Station. A nurse and several CNAs attempted to wake the respondent. The nurse reported that she noticed the smell of alcohol. The respondent's blood pressure was taken and EMS was called. By the time EMS arrived, she had regained consciousness and could not recall passing out. The respondent continued talking incoherently. She was taken to the emergency room at Ochsner. As part of the medical exam, a blood alcohol level was drawn. The result was 0.251%. The board received information regarding her emergency room visit to Ochsner on 09/25/13. The respondent's diagnosis was noted as syncope and alcohol ingestion. According to the ER physician notes, it was

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determined that her alcohol level was elevated and that she was considered legally intoxicated. (Exhibits E4-E6, I8)

5. On 12/3/2013, the board summarily suspended the respondent's practical nursing license.
6. The board received information from St. Joseph of Harahan that the respondent was terminated on 07/26/12 for insubordination, dishonesty, failure to obey orders and no call/no show. She missed a mandatory computer training class that was set up for her after she had missed her school computer training class. It was noted that she had lied about not knowing what time the class was scheduled for. Prior to her termination, she had been counseled a number of times for various practice related issues. On 06/08/2011, she was written up for defective or improper work. She failed to follow physician orders regarding lab work and did not complete labs as ordered and failed to complete lab slips and fax them. She also failed to carry out PT/INR orders on another resident and failed to transcribe the order to the physician order sheet. On 03/08/12, she was written up for excessive tardiness. On 03/19/12, she was written up for violation of company policy. She reported to work two and one-half hours late for her shift without notifying the DON and ADON. She was suspended for 3 days. (Exhibits H6-H10)
7. The board received information from Twin Oaks that the respondent was terminated on 01/04/13 for excessive tardiness and unacceptable behavior and noted that she was not eligible for re-hire. She was scheduled to work the 3-11 pm shift and upon arrival to the facility, staff members noticed her behavior as strange. The charge nurse and DON were notified of her behavior. Upon their arrival to the nurse's station, she was observed talking to herself, and her eyes appeared heavy and red. She was also witnessed to almost fall while walking from the nurse's station. She was asked to attend a meeting with the Administrator and DON. She admitted to being enrolled in some type of program in which she was required to submit urine and hair samples. It was determined that she was in no condition to care for residents and she was asked to leave.

Additionally, it was noted that she received an employee warning notice on 10/17/12 for failing to insert a Foley on a resident as ordered. She received a one day suspension. (Exhibits G7-G8)

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8. Records from Marrero Healthcare Center indicated that the respondent was counseled on 08/23/13 for false documentation. She was instructed to provide documentation for her absenteeism on 08/21/13-08/22/13. Upon verification of the documentation she provided, it was determined that the hospitalization records she provided were fraudulent. (Exhibits F7-F8, Pg. 28 of hearing transcript)

**JURISDICTION**

The board has jurisdiction over the parties hereto and the subject matter hereof.

**CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

Based on the facts set forth in the entire record and outlined herein above, the respondent is in violation of:

1. The Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, Title 37, Chapter 11, Part II, Section 969 A. (4);
- (c) is unfit, or incompetent by reason of negligence habit, or other causes;**
  - (d) is habitually intemperate or is addicted to the use of habit forming drugs;**
  - (e) is mentally incompetent;**
  - (f) is guilty of unprofessional conduct;**
  - (g) has violated any provisions of this Part;**

**And 978 A (8) Violate any provisions of this Part and B.**

2. The Louisiana Administrative Code, Title 46, Part XLVII, Subpart 1, Sections § 306 T.
- 3. being unfit, or incompetent by reason of negligence, habit or other causes;**
  - 4. being habitually intemperate or addicted to the use of habit-forming drugs;**
  - 5. being mentally incompetent;**
  - 8. being guilty of unprofessional conduct;**
    - a. failure to practice practical nursing in accordance with the standards normally expected;**
    - b. failure to utilize appropriate judgment in administering nursing practice;**
    - c. failure to exercise technical competence in carrying out nursing care;**
    - g. improper use of drugs, medical supplies, or patients' records;**
    - i. falsifying records;**
    - j. intentionally committing any act that adversely affects the physical or psychosocial welfare of the patient;**

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- l. leaving a nursing assignment without properly notifying appropriate personnel;
- o. being guilty of moral turpitude;
- p. inappropriate, incomplete or improper documentation;
- q. using or being under the influence of alcohol, while on duty, and/or while making application for employment, or using or being under the influence of drugs which impair judgment while on duty, or using or being under the influence of illegal drugs whether on or off duty;
- r. possess a physical or psychological impairment which interferes with the judgment, skills or abilities required for the practice of practical nursing;
- t. violating any provisions of R.S. 37:961 et seq. (the practical nursing practice act), as amended or aiding or abetting therein.

**ORDER**

The matter of **Debra Thomas, license #220684**, on **June 20, 2014** came on for final action by the Louisiana State Board of Practical Nurse Examiners.

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED**, that the license of the respondent, **Debra Thomas, license #220684** be

**REVOKED  
AND**

1. The respondent shall return his/her current practical nursing license to the board office within **ten (10) days** of the date of this order.
2. The respondent is to be fined \$500.00, **payable by cashier's check or money order only**, for the violations detailed in the conclusions of law, payable within **90 days** of the date of the board order.
3. The respondent is to be assessed a hearing assessment fee of \$500.00, **payable by cashier's check or money order only**, within **90 days** of the date of the board order.
4. The respondent shall not practice and/or attempt to practice practical nursing in this state involving the direct and/or indirect care of any persons. Revocation in the state of Louisiana is permanent and final.

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**Public Records**

This order is public record. All disciplinary actions of the board will be reported to all required data banks and agencies as required by law.

Rendered this **20th** day of **June, 2014** and signed this **20th** day of **June, 2014** at Metairie, Louisiana.

*Myron L. Collins LPN*

**MYRON COLLINS, LPN  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**

*M. Lynn Ansardi RN*

**M. LYNN ANSARDI, RN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Mailed this **20th** day of **June, 2014**, by U.S. postal service certified mail return receipt **#7014 0150 0001 8287 9230** and regular mail to the following address:

Debra Thomas  
8309 Waco Street  
Metairie, LA 70003