

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
BOARD OF NURSING

IN THE MATTER OF THE LICENSE OF : Administrative Action
: :
: :
: :
ETHEL OKORONKWO, R.N. :
License # 26NR 11009100 : FINAL ORDER
: OF DISCIPLINE
: :
TO PRACTICE NURSING IN THE :
STATE OF NEW JERSEY :

This matter was opened to the New Jersey State Board of Nursing ("Board") upon receipt of information which the Board has reviewed and upon which the following findings of fact and conclusions of law are made:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Ethel Okoronkwo ("Respondent") is a Registered Professional Nurse (RN) in the State of New Jersey, and has been a licensee at all times relevant hereto.

2. On or about June 15, 2015, a letter issued on behalf of the Board, summarizing for Respondent the continuing education that she had already submitted to the Board, and asking Respondent to supply documentation of completion of additional required continuing education.

3. Respondent had provided documentation of thirty (30) contact hours of nursing continuing education completed on August 2, 2013, as well as documentation of thirty (30) contact hours completed in April of 2011.

4. In response to the June 15, 2015 communication, Respondent supplied documentation of completion of thirty (30) contact hours of qualifying continuing education on April 20, 2015, and thirty contact hours of continuing education completed in July of 2015.

5. On her 2013 renewal application, respondent indicated that she would have timely completed all required nursing continuing education for the June 1, 2011 - May 31, 2013 licensing cycle by May 31, 2013.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Respondent's failure to document completion of required nursing continuing education for the June 1, 2011 - May 31, 2013 licensing cycle constitutes a violation of N.J.A.C. 13:37-5.3, subjecting Respondent to sanctions pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e) and (h).

Respondent's indication on her 2013 renewal application that she would have completed all required nursing continuing education for the June 1, 2011 - May 31, 2013 licensing cycle by May 31, 2013 constitutes misrepresentation in violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(b).

DISCUSSION

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, a Provisional Order of Discipline seeking a reprimand and a two hundred and fifty dollar (\$250) civil penalty was entered on August 17, 2015. Copies were served upon Respondent via regular and certified mail. The Provisional Order was subject to finalization by the Board at 5:00 p.m. on the thirtieth day following entry unless Respondent requested a modification or dismissal of the stated findings of fact and conclusions of law by setting forth in writing any and all reasons why said findings and conclusions should be modified or dismissed and submitting any and all documents or other written evidence supporting respondent's request for consideration and reasons therefor.

Respondent replied to the Provisional Order of Discipline and maintained that she could not find proof of completion of continuing education within the June 1, 2011 - May 31, 2013 biennial period. Respondent was able to locate and provide documentation of the following continuing education:

30 hours within the June 1, 2009 - May 31, 2011 biennial period;
0 hours within the June 1, 2011 - May 31, 2013 biennial period;
30 hours within the June 1, 2013 - May 31, 2015 biennial period;
31 hours within the June 1, 2015 - May 31, 2017 biennial period
(including the required course on Organ and Tissue Donation).

In cases of lost or missing certificates of completion, continuing education providers will readily provide duplicate certificates. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 13:37-5.3, nurses are required to maintain documentation of completion of continuing education and submit such documentation to the Board upon request. Respondent failed to do so and as such, has failed to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Board, that she completed the required continuing education for the June 1, 2011 - May 31, 2013 biennial period. Respondent may apply 30 of the hours recently completed to cure the deficiency of the June 1, 2011 - May 31, 2013 biennial period, but those same hours may not also be applied to satisfy the requirements of the current biennial period.

The Board reviewed Respondent's submissions and determined that further proceedings were not necessary and that no material discrepancies had been raised. The Board was not persuaded that the submitted materials merited further consideration, as Respondent did not dispute the findings of fact or conclusions of law. Respondent failed to demonstrate completion of 30 hours of continuing education within the June 1, 2011 - May 31, 2013 biennial period and misrepresented on her renewal that she had done so when she is unable to provide any documentation thereof.

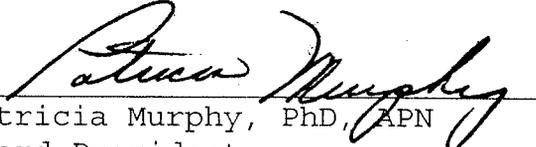
ACCORDINGLY, IT IS on this 22nd day of January, 2016,
ORDERED that:

1. A reprimand is hereby imposed upon Respondent for the violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(b).

2. A civil penalty in the amount of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250) is hereby imposed for Respondent's failure to timely complete nursing continuing education. Payment shall be made by certified check, bank cashier check, or money order payable to "State of New Jersey," or by wire transfer, direct deposit, or credit card payment delivered or mailed to State Board of Nursing, Attention: Leslie Burgos, P.O. Box 45010, Newark, New Jersey 07101. Any other form of payment will be rejected and will be returned to the party making the payment. Payment shall be made no later than twenty-one (21) days after the date of filing of this Final Order of Discipline. In the event Respondent fails to make a timely payment, a certificate of debt shall be filed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:1-24 and the Board may bring such other proceedings as authorized by law.

3. Respondent shall complete 29 additional hours of continuing education prior to May 31, 2017 to satisfy the requirements of the current biennial period.

NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD OF NURSING

By: 
Patricia Murphy, PhD, APN
Board President