

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**CHRISTINE K GRAFT**  
Claimant

**MERCY HEALTH SERVICES-IOWA CORP**  
Employer

**APPEAL 20A-UI-10956-JC-T**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 04/19/20**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2)**

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Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Able to and Available for Work  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10) – Availability Disqualifications – Leave of Absence  
Iowa Code § 96.19(38)a & b – Total and Partial Unemployment  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(26) – Able & Available – Availability Disqualifications  
Iowa Code § 96.7(2)a(2) – Same Base Period Employment

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer/appellant, filed an appeal from the August 27, 2020 (reference 01) Iowa Workforce Development (“IWD”) unemployment insurance decision that allowed benefits. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on October 27 2020. The claimant participated personally. The employer was represented by Jennifer Pierce. Heidi Willrett testified for employer.

The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative records. Employer Exhibits A-C were admitted. Based on the evidence, the arguments presented, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

**ISSUES:**

Is the claimant totally, partially, or temporarily unemployed?  
Is the claimant able to and available for work?  
Is the claimant on a leave of absence?  
Is the claimant still employed at the same hours and wages?  
Is the employer’s account subject to charge?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant has worked for employer since 2017. Most recently, the claimant works for the employer as a full-time nursing assistant.

Claimant began a leave of absence March 18, 2020 due to her husband and son being high-risk if exposed due to COVID-19. Claimant established her claim for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of April 19, 2020, which coincides with her leave of absence. She remained on a leave of absence until June 4, 2020. Full-time work was available to claimant the period of her leave of absence.

Claimant resumed employment June 4, 2020 and worked through July 7, 2020. She called off sick July 13, 17 and 18, 2020.

The claimant requested, and was approved for a second personal leave of absence effective July 19, 2020. Claimant is on the leave of absence to care for her husband. While claimant is physically able to work, she is unable to work at this time due to the care she is providing. Work is available by the employer. **She is approved for a leave of absence through January 5, 2021.**

#### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant is not able to and available for work effective April 19, 2020.

Iowa Code § 96.19(38)b provides:

As used in this chapter, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

38. "Total and partial unemployment".

a. An individual shall be deemed "totally unemployed" in any week with respect to which no wages are payable to the individual and during which the individual performs no services.

b. An individual shall be deemed partially unemployed in any week in which either of the following apply:

(1) While employed at the individual's then regular job, the individual works less than the regular full-time week and in which the individual earns less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

(2) The individual, having been separated from the individual's regular job, earns at odd jobs less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

c. An individual shall be deemed temporarily unemployed if for a period, verified by the department, not to exceed four consecutive weeks, the individual is unemployed due to a plant shutdown, vacation, inventory, lack of work, or emergency from the individual's regular job or trade in which the individual worked full-time and will again work full-time, if the individual's employment, although temporarily suspended, has not been terminated.

Iowa Code section 96.4(3) provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.1A, subsection 38, paragraph "b", subparagraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(10) The claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, such period is deemed to be a period of voluntary unemployment and shall be considered ineligible for benefits for such period.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(23) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(23) The claimant's availability for other work is unduly limited because such claimant is working to such a degree that removes the claimant from the labor market.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(1) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(1) An individual who is ill and presently not able to perform work due to illness.

For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits, she must be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work as required by the unemployment insurance law. Iowa Code § 96.4(3). The burden is on the claimant to establish that she is able and available for work within the meaning of the statute. Iowa Code § 96.6(2); Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22.

**April 19, 2020 through June 3, 2020:** The administrative law judge recognizes the claimant has filed her current claim due to hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic and is also sympathetic to the claimant's situation. Here, the employer has work available for the claimant. However, the claimant informed the employer she was unable to work due to her family members being high risk if exposed to COVID-19. The employer agreed to allow the claimant time off for that reason. The claimant is considered to be on a leave of absence and is not available for work, according to Iowa law. Therefore, the claimant is not eligible for regular, state-funded unemployment insurance benefits.

**June 4, 2020 through July 7, 2020:** Claimant resumed full-time work and therefore was working to such a degree that removes the claimant from the labor market. Benefits are denied for this period. See Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(23).

**July 8-19, 2020:** Claimant was not able to work her shifts due to illness, and therefore was not able to and available for work. Benefits are denied for this period. See Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(1).

**July 19, 2020 to present:** Claimant initiated and was approved for a second leave of absence. She does not meet the eligibility requirements. Benefits are denied. See Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10)

*Note to Claimant:* This decision denies benefits. *If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.* If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first

page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits, but who are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found below.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated August 27, 2020, (reference 01) is REVERSED. The claimant is not able and available for work effective April 19, 2020. Regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the state of Iowa are denied until such time the claimant is able to and available for work.

**NOTE TO CLAIMANT:**

- This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision.
- If you do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits due to disqualifying separations and are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19, you may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** More information about how to apply for PUA is available online at:  
[www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/bua-information](http://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/bua-information)



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October 29, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

jlb/scn