

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

68-0157 (9-06) - 3091078 - EI

BENJAMIN A MOODY
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 06A-UI-11304-M

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

MERCY HOSPITAL
Employer

**OC: 10/29/06 R: 02
Claimant: Appellant (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated November 20, 2006, reference 01, which held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on December 19, 2006. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Patti Steelman, Employee Relations Compliance Coordinator and Sandra Wessling, Occupational Health Registered Nurse. Exhibit A was admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on October 8, 2006.

Claimant was discharged on October 26, 2006 by employer because claimant violated an agreement signed February 24, 2003. Claimant made application for family medical leave to have reasonable and necessary medical treatment for 45 days. Employer deemed the medical treatment as a violation of the three year old agreement. Claimant promptly informed employer of the need to be absent from work for medical treatment.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.5-2-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

2. Discharge for misconduct. If the department finds that the individual has been discharged for misconduct in connection with the individual's employment:

a. The individual shall be disqualified for benefits until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.32(1)a provides:

Discharge for misconduct.

(1) Definition.

a. "Misconduct" is defined as a deliberate act or omission by a worker which constitutes a material breach of the duties and obligations arising out of such worker's contract of employment. Misconduct as the term is used in the disqualification provision as being limited to conduct evincing such willful or wanton disregard of an employer's interest as is found in deliberate violation or disregard of standards of behavior which the employer has the right to expect of employees, or in carelessness or negligence of such degree of recurrence as to manifest equal culpability, wrongful intent or evil design, or to show an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests or of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. On the other hand mere inefficiency, unsatisfactory conduct, failure in good performance as the result of inability or incapacity, inadvertencies or ordinary negligence in isolated instances, or good faith errors in judgment or discretion are not to be deemed misconduct within the meaning of the statute.

871 IAC 24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

In this matter, the evidence fails to establish that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning receipt of medical treatment. Claimant was warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, fails to constitute misconduct in part because the warning is too old. The warning was over three years old at the time of separation. It is too stale to place claimant on notice that he could be discharged. Furthermore, absenteeism due to illness is excusable if properly reported. Claimant properly reported his absence in a timely fashion. This is not misconduct as the treatment was reasonable and necessary with proper notice.

In summary, claimant was discharged due to treatment of an illness. This is not an incident that can be defined as misconduct. The administrative law judge holds that claimant was not discharged for an act of misconduct and, as such, is not disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated November 20, 2006, reference 01, is reversed. Claimant is eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, provided claimant meets all other eligibility requirements.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/css