

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

---

**NANCY RIEDERER**  
Claimant

**CATHOLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES - IOWA**  
Employer

**APPEAL 20A-UI-04990-HP-T**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE**  
**DECISION**

**OC: 03/22/20**  
**Claimant: Appellant (2)**

---

Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quitting  
Iowa Code § 96.5(2) – Discharge due to Misconduct

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Claimant Nancy Riederer filed an appeal from a May 4, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based upon her voluntarily quitting work without good cause attributable to the employer, Catholic Health Initiatives-Iowa (“CHI”). Notices of hearing were mailed to the parties’ last known addresses of record for a telephone hearing scheduled for June 16, 2020. Riederer appeared and testified. No one appeared on behalf of CHI. I also took administrative notice of Riederer’s unemployment insurance benefits records maintained by Iowa Workforce Development.

**ISSUE:**

Did the claimant voluntarily quit the employment with good cause attributable to the employer?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Riederer commenced her full-time employment with CHI on March 27, 2017, as a patient access representative at Iowa Heart. Riederer was responsible for customer service, answering phone calls, checking patients in and out, scheduling patients, and making sure the paperwork for patients was complete, including insurance. Christine Greaves was her immediate supervisor.

Riederer worked in customer service with two coworkers. In approximately August 2019, Riederer’s coworker, Lisa, stopped sharing information with her. Riederer acknowledged their personalities were not good together, but during Lisa’s first six months of employment, there was not a problem. Lisa wanted to take control and did not want Riederer checking the patients in and out. She was not sharing information with Riederer and causing duplicate work. Lisa would often respond when Riederer would bring up the problem, “nobody died.” Riederer thought the comment was inappropriate because the office treated patients with pacemakers and many patients did die. Riederer talked to Greaves about the situation about five times. The situation did not improve.

On Wednesday, November 27, 2019, Greaves held a meeting with Riederer, Lisa B., Mary, the other front desk worker, and the trainer. The room was small and Riederer felt claustrophobic. At the beginning of the meeting Greaves talked about new changes in the office, expectations going forward, and the direction CHI was moving toward. Greaves then turned to Lisa and asked her if she wanted to bring up anything. Lisa complained about Riederer and Riederer felt attacked. She told the group she felt that she was being attacked. Greaves responded Riederer was doing a good job and she was not being attacked. Riederer did not feel like she had been supported by Greaves.

Riederer went on vacation for the Thanksgiving holiday. On Monday she called Greaves and told her, "I have had a lousy four days, I cannot come back, I am sick to my stomach with the atmosphere." Greaves told Riederer to take the day off and come back the next day. Riederer relayed she told Greaves in the past she would clam up when confronting Lisa and she could not defend herself. Greaves responded Riederer was doing a good job. Riederer replied "I know you don't want me here because I am retiring in a couple of years." Greaves told Riederer she would not be able to work for CHI again for a year if she quit. Riederer did not go back to work.

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

Iowa Code section 96.5(1) provides an individual "shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits: . . . .If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department." The Iowa Supreme Court has held a "voluntary quit" means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer." *Wills v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 447 N.W.2d 137, 138 (Iowa 1989). A voluntary quit requires "an intention to terminate the employment relationship accompanied by an overt act carrying out the intent." *Peck v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 492 N.W.2d 438, 440 (Iowa Ct. App. 1992). "Good cause" for leaving employment must be that which is reasonable to the average person, not the overly sensitive individual or the claimant in particular. *Uniweld Products v. Indus. Relations Comm'n*, 277 So.2d 827 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. 1973).

871 Iowa Administrative Code 24.25(21) provides:

**Voluntary quit without good cause.** In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code section 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer: . . . .

(21) The claimant left because of dissatisfaction with the work environment.

871 Iowa Administrative Code 24.26(4) provides:

**Voluntary quit with good cause attributable to the employer and separations not considered to be voluntary quits.** The following are reasons for a claimant leaving employment with good cause attributable to the employer:

**24.26(4)** The claimant left due to intolerable or detrimental working conditions.

Riederer's coworker, Lisa, was not sharing information with her at work and not respecting her. Riederer raised her concerns to her supervisor many times. Nothing changed. During a meeting the day before Thanksgiving Riederer attended a meeting with her front desk coworkers, her supervisor, and the trainer. During the meeting Riederer felt attacked. During the Thanksgiving holiday, Riederer felt sick to her stomach and she was concerned about her health because of the stress. Riederer shared her concerns with her supervisor and she offered nothing to change the situation. After considering the evidence in this case, I find Riederer quit her job with good cause attributable to CHI. Benefits are allowed.

**DECISION:**

The May 4, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision denying unemployment insurance benefits is reversed in favor of the claimant/appellant. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.



Heather L. Palmer  
Administrative Law Judge  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau  
Iowa Workforce Development  
1000 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209  
Fax (515) 478-3528

June 29, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

hlp/scn