

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

CAMERON X SPROCK

Claimant

APPEAL 20A-UI-04906-S1-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

GRAPETREE MEDICAL STAFFING INC

Employer

OC: 03/29/20

Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Able and Available

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(26) – Able & Available – Availability Disqualifications

871 IAC 24.23(10) – Voluntary Leave of Absence

Iowa Code § 96.3-7 – Overpayment

PL 116-136 Section 2104 (B) – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Cameron Sprock (claimant) appealed a representative's May 28, 2020, decision (reference 02) that denied benefits as of May 3, 2020, because he was not able and available to work with Grapetree Medical Staffing (employer). After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on June 24, 2020. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Elizabeth Soper, Human Resources Specialist. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative file.

ISSUES:

The issue is whether the claimant is available for work, whether the claimant was overpaid benefits, and whether the claimant is eligible for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on January 14, 2020, as a part-time, on-call certified nursing assistant. As a requirement of his employment, he went in and out of varied work environments. The claimant had been diagnosed with asthma. After the pandemic became more prevalent, he talked to his family, friends, and his primary care physician at the Veteran's Administration. His doctor did not restrict him from working but the claimant decided it was best if he was selective about his work locations.

On May 6, 2020, the employer received a request from the claimant. The claimant asked for a two-week leave due to his own health conditions and concerns for loved ones who were at high risk to contract Covid-19. The employer granted the claimant's request for leave. The claimant was free to return at any time. On May 24, 2020, the claimant started working shifts again. There has been plenty of work available for the claimant throughout his employment.

The claimant filed for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of March 29, 2020. His weekly benefit amount was determined to be \$379.00. The claimant received benefits of \$1,272.00 from March 29, 2020, through the week ending May 30, 2020. He also received \$2,400.00 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation during that time.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant is able to and available for work.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(1), (10), and (23) provide:

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.

(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.

(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.

The claimant has the burden of proof in establishing his ability and availability for work. *Davoren v. Iowa Employment Security Commission*, 277 N.W.2d 602 (Iowa 1979). As of March 29, 2020, the claimant was working for the employer in his normal manner. He was not available for work from March 29, 2020, through May 2, 2020, because he was working to such a degree that it removed him from the labor market.

When employees are unable to perform work due to a medical condition, they are considered to be unavailable for work. The claimant had asthma and felt he should limit his hours and stop working. The employer had work available but agreed to allow the claimant time off for that reason. The claimant is considered to be on a leave of absence due to his asthma and is not available for work. Therefore, the claimant is not eligible for regular, state-funded unemployment insurance benefits from May 3, 2020, through May 23, 2020. .

As of March 24, 2020, the claimant returned to work in his normal manner. His hours returned to normal. The claimant was working to such a degree that it removed him from the labor market. The claimant was not available for work as of March 24, 2020. The claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits beginning March 29, 2020.

The claimant has not established he is able to and available for work, even under the United States Department of Labor's guidance to flexibly interpret this requirement. See Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 10-20.

Even though the claimant is not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits under state law, he may be eligible for federally funded unemployment insurance benefits under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ("Cares Act"), Public Law 116-136. Section 2102 of the CARES Act creates a new temporary federal program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) that in general provides up to 39 weeks of unemployment benefits. An individual receiving PUA benefits may also receive the \$600 weekly benefit

amount (WBA) under the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program if he or she is eligible for such compensation for the week claimed. The claimant must apply for PUA, as noted in the instructions provided in the "Note to Claimant" below.

The next issue is whether the claimant was overpaid unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3(7)a-b, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

The claimant received unemployment insurance benefits. This was during the period of time the claimant has been determined to be ineligible to receive benefits. This decision denies benefits. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

The final issue is whether the claimant is eligible for or overpaid Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. The administrative law judge finds that he is overpaid those benefits.

PL116-136, Sec. 2104 provides, in pertinent part:

(b) Provisions of Agreement

(1) Federal pandemic unemployment compensation.--Any agreement under this section shall provide that the State agency of the State will make payments of regular compensation to individuals in amounts and to the extent that they would be determined if the State law of the State were applied, with respect to any week for which the individual is (disregarding this section) otherwise entitled under the State law to receive regular compensation, as if such State law had been modified in a manner such that the amount of regular compensation (including dependents' allowances) payable for any week shall be equal to

(A) the amount determined under the State law (before the application of this paragraph), plus

(B) an additional amount of \$600 (in this section referred to as "Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation").

....

(f) Fraud and Overpayments

(2) Repayment.-- In the case of individuals who have received amounts of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to which they were not entitled, the State shall

require such individuals to repay the amounts of such Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to the State agency...

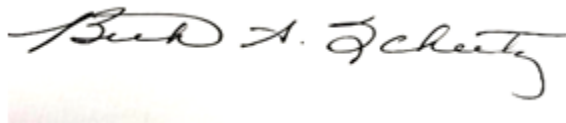
The claimant has been disqualified from receiving regular unemployment insurance benefits. The claimant has received Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

DECISION:

The May 28, 2020, (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The claimant is not able to work and available for work effective March 29, 2020. Regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the state of Iowa are denied until such time as the claimant is able to and available for work.

The claimant has received unemployment insurance benefits and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. This decision denies benefits. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

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. 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). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.



Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge
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July 6, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/sam