

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

SHELLY S BROEN
Claimant

NORDSTROM INC
Employer

APPEAL 15A-UI-08536-DGT
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 07/05/15
Claimant: Appellant (4)

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated July 21, 2015, (reference 02) that held claimant not able to and available for work. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on August 19, 2015. Claimant participated personally. Employer failed to respond to the hearing notice and did not participate.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant is able and available for work?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant became ill and was not able to work beginning on or about July 5, 2015. She was granted a leave of absence at that time. Claimant has since been released to return to work without restrictions on August 3, 2015. She is in the process of resuming her employment.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes that the claimant is able to work and available for work effective August 3, 2015, but was not able and available for work beginning on July 5, 2015 through August 2, 2015.

Iowa Code § 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 § 96.19,

subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph 1, or temporarily unemployed as defined in § 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 § 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under § 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1)a provides:

Benefits eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

(1) Able to work. An individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood.

a. Illness, injury or pregnancy. Each case is decided upon an individual basis, recognizing that various work opportunities present different physical requirements. A statement from a medical practitioner is considered prima facie evidence of the physical ability of the individual to perform the work required. A pregnant individual must meet the same criteria for determining ableness as do all other individuals.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(35) provides:

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

(35) Where the claimant is not able to work and is under the care of a medical practitioner and has not been released as being able to work.

To be able to work, "[a]n individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood." *Sierra v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 508 N.W.2d 719, 721 (Iowa 1993); *Geiken v. Lutheran Home for the Aged*, 468 N.W.2d 223 (Iowa 1991); Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1). "An evaluation of an individual's ability to work for the purposes of determining that individual's eligibility for unemployment benefits must necessarily take into consideration the economic and legal forces at work in the general labor market in which the individual resides." *Sierra* at 723. This means that when evaluating whether a person with a protected disability is able and available to work we must take into account the reasonable accommodation requirements imposed on employers under federal, state, and local laws. *Id.*

Inasmuch as the illness was not work related and the treating physician has released the claimant to return to work, the claimant has established the ability to work beginning on August 3, 2015. Benefits shall be allowed effective August 3, 2015. Benefits are withheld beginning on July 5, 2015 through August 2, 2015 for the period when she was on her leave of absence.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated July 21, 2015, (reference 02) is modified in favor of the appellant. Claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, effective July 5,

2015 through August 2, 2015. She is eligible to receive benefits beginning on August 3, 2015, provided she meets all other eligibility requirements.

Duane L. Golden
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

dlg/css