

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**LISA I COFFMAN**

Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 13A-UI-06698-HT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**CARE INITIATIVES**

Employer

**OC: 04/28/13**

**Claimant: Respondent (2-R)**

Section 96.5(2)a – Discharge

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer, Care Initiatives, filed an appeal from a decision dated May 29, 2013, reference 01. The decision allowed benefits to the claimant, Lisa Coffman. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on July 10, 2013. The claimant did not provide a telephone number where she could be contacted and did not participate. The employer participated by Administrator Brandon Kranovich and was represented by TALX in the person of Treve Lumsden.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct sufficient to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Lisa Coffman was employed by Care Initiatives from September 26, 2011 until April 4, 2013 as a full-time dietary manager. The current administrator, Brandon Kranovich, took over in December 2012 at which time the claimant was already on a final written warning for poor performance. He gave her a letter of expectation in January 2013 in which he laid out all of her job duties and his expectations for her performance regarding each and every one.

Mr. Kranovich reviewed these expectations with her on February 14, 2013, because there were still problems with the budget. On February 21, 2013, he reviewed it again because no changes had occurred.

In March 2013 the State of Iowa conducted an inspection of the facility and issued its report to the administrator on April 1, 2013. The dietary department was required to change some care plans for a couple of residents and Mr. Kranovich notified Ms. Coffman of this. A few hours later she told him she had completed the changes and all the care plans were up to date. The administrator reviewed the care plans and found they were not up to date and the changes were not complete. He discussed this with the claimant and she said she would see to it.

On April 4, 2013, Ms. Coffman again announced she had done the work but another review by the employer revealed the care plans were not correct. The discharged the claimant on that date.

Lisa Coffman has received unemployment benefits since filing a claim with an effective date of April 28, 2013.

#### **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.

The claimant had been advised her job was in jeopardy as a result of her poor performance. The specific tasks assigned to her by the administrator were fully within her job description but she consistently failed to perform these jobs and misrepresented the matter when she asserted they had been done. Ms. Coffman did not participate in the hearing and did not provide any explanation for her failure to perform her job duties as required. Failure to perform work to the best of one's ability is conduct not in the best interests of the employer. The claimant is disqualified.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7, 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.

b. (1) If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5. However, provided the benefits were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment. The employer shall not be charged with the benefits.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

The claimant has received unemployment benefits to which she is not entitled. The question of whether the claimant must repay these benefits is remanded to the UIS division.

**DECISION:**

The representative's decision of May 29, 2013, reference 01, is reversed. Lisa Coffman is disqualified and benefits are withheld until she has earned ten times her weekly benefit amount in insured work, provided she is otherwise eligible. The issue of whether the claimant must repay the unemployment benefits is remanded to UIS division for determination.

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Bonny G. Hendricksmeier  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

bgh/css