

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**VALERIE L WATSON**  
Claimant

**PINNACLE HEALTH FACILITIES XVII L**

**APPEAL NO: 18R-UI-00949-JCT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 10/29/17  
Claimant: Respondent (6)**

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Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default  
Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge for Misconduct  
Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quitting  
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 – Employer/Representative Participation Fact-finding Interview

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

An appeal was filed by the employer, Pinnacle Health Facilities XVII, from an unemployment insurance decision dated November 15, 2017, (reference 01) that allowed benefits based upon separation between the claimant and employer. A first hearing was scheduled between the parties on December 13, 2017. The employer/appellant failed to appear at the hearing, and the appeal was dismissed. Upon a remand decision from the Employment Appeal Board, the appellant's request to reopen the hearing was granted.

Notice of the second hearing was mailed to the parties' last known addresses of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 8:00 a.m. on February 15, 2018. A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system after 8:15 a.m. the same day shows the employer/appellant failed to respond to the hearing notice instruction and provide a telephone number at which it could be reached for the scheduled hearing, and no hearing was held.

**ISSUE:**

Should the appeal be dismissed based upon the appellant not being available to participate in the scheduled hearing?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The parties were properly notified of the scheduled hearing on this appeal. The employer/appellant, Pinnacle Health Facilities XVII, failed to respond to the hearing notice instruction and provide a telephone number at which it could be reached, nor did it request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

The hearing notice instruction specifically advised the parties:

Date: THU FEB 15, 2018  
Iowa Time: 8:00 a.m.

**You must register for the hearing immediately!**

**You must register your phone number and the name(s) and phone number(s) of any witness(es) with the Appeals Bureau. If you do not register, the judge will not be able to call you or your witness(es) for the hearing.**

The agency's initial decision concluded that the claimant was allowed unemployment insurance benefits.

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

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a hearing after proper service of notice, the judge may enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. The statute further states that if a party makes a timely request to vacate the decision and shows good cause for failing to appear, the judge shall vacate the decision and conduct another hearing.

Agency rule Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides that if the appealing party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the Appeals Bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing *by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided*, the judge may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code § 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing and shows good cause for reopening the hearing. The rule further states that *failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing is not good cause for reopening the record*. Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7)c. (Emphasis added.)

The employer/appellant, Pinnacle Health Facilities XVII, appealed the unemployment insurance decision but failed to be available to participate in the scheduled hearing. The appellant has therefore defaulted on its appeal pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.14(7), and the decision remains in force and effect.

If the appellant disagrees with this decision, a request to reopen the record must be made to the administrative law judge within 15 days after the mailing date of this decision. The request should be mailed to the administrative law judge at the address listed at the end of this decision and must explain the emergency or other good cause that prevented the appellant from participating in the hearing at the scheduled time.

**DECISION:**

The appellant is in default and the appeal is dismissed. The unemployment insurance decision dated November 15, 2017, (reference 01) allowing benefits remains in effect.

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Jennifer L. Beckman  
Administrative Law Judge  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau  
Iowa Workforce Development  
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Decision Dated and Mailed

jlb/rvs