

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

TERESA L MEYER
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-10753-MT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

ALLEN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Employer

**OC: 10/21/07 R: 03
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Overpayment of Benefits

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated November 15, 2007, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on December 6, 2007. Claimant participated personally with witness Kayla Dix. Employer participated by Ken Leibold, Director of Human Resources, Deb Gingrich, Clinical Director and Theresa Troug, Nurse Manger.

ISSUE:

The issues in this matter are whether claimant was discharged for misconduct and is overpaid unemployment insurance benefits.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for the employer October 8, 2007.

Employer discharged claimant on October 8, 2007 because claimant made disparaging remarks about the hospital to a patient. Claimant was also discharged because she lied to supervisors during a meeting September 28, 2007. Claimant was asked about employees having wages garnished. Claimant told the supervisors that four employees had their wages garnished by the employer for medical bills incurred with the employer. Employer investigated this allegation and found it false with respect to four employees. Claimant also indicated that the hospital did not pay or treat its employees properly. Claimant told a patient's family that the health insurance was bad and that the nurse patient ratio was poor. Claimant bad mouthed the employer to a patient's family in an effort to make the employer look bad. A letter of complaint was filed concerning claimant's derogatory comments about the employer. Claimant also had derogatory things to say about the employer's fund raising campaign to build a new addition. Claimant was given a copy of the falsification policy which calls for discharge.

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.

871 IAC 24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

The administrative law judge holds that the evidence has established that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated the employer's policy concerning falsification and inappropriate conduct with patients. Claimant was warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge constitutes misconduct because claimant intentionally bad mouthed the employer in front of a patient and to the patient's family. Claimant intentionally smeared the reputation of the employer. While some of the information may have been true that does not excuse the conduct. Claimant had no business bad mouthing the employer for poor health benefits and coercive fund raising tactics. The statements made by claimant were intentional efforts to smear the employer's name and reputation to a patient and family. Claimant's actions were not in the best interest of employer. Therefore, claimant was

discharged for an act of misconduct and as such, is disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

The next issue concerns an overpayment of unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. 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.

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.

The administrative law judge holds that claimant is overpaid unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$2,082.00 pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.3-7 because a decision has determined the claimant to be ineligible to receive benefits due to a discharge for misconduct. Since claimant has been disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits, the claim shall be locked until claimant has re-qualified or is otherwise eligible.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated November 15, 2007, reference 01, is reversed. Unemployment insurance benefits shall be withheld until claimant has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided claimant is otherwise eligible. Claimant is overpaid unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$2,082.00.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/pjs