

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JUDY A BAHLMANN

Claimant

APPEAL NO: 13A-UI-01744-DT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

EXCEPTIONAL PERSONS INC

Employer

OC: 01/13/13

Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Judy A. Bahlman (claimant) appealed a representative's February 12, 2013 decision (reference 01) that concluded she was not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits after a separation from employment from Exceptional Persons, Inc. (employer). After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on April 2, 2013. The claimant participated in the hearing and was represented by Benjamin Roth, attorney at law. Lisa Paterno appeared on the employer's behalf and presented testimony from one other witness, Nicole Ericson. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the parties, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

ISSUE:

Was the claimant discharged for work-connected misconduct?

OUTCOME:

Affirmed. Benefits denied.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

After a prior period of employment with the employer, the claimant most recently started working for the employer on June 11, 2002. She worked full time as direct support professional in the employer's service for persons with intellectual disabilities. Her last day of work was January 14, 2013. The employer discharged her on that date. The stated reason for the discharge was continued medication administration errors.

On December 7, 2012 the claimant was given a written warning for multiple medication administration errors; she was placed on a three-month monitoring program and was informed that further issues could result in discipline up to and including termination. On January 10, 2013 the claimant had signed out a client's medication as being administered at 2:00 p.m.; the claimant did this documentation at about 11:00 a.m. This predocumentation is not permitted. As a result of this further medication administration error while she was effectively under a probationary period, the employer discharged the claimant.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

A claimant is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if an employer has discharged the claimant for reasons constituting work-connected misconduct. Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a. Before a claimant can be denied unemployment insurance benefits, the employer has the burden to establish the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct. *Cosper v. IDJS*, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982); Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a.

In order to establish misconduct such as to disqualify a former employee from benefits an employer must establish the employee was responsible for a deliberate act or omission which was a material breach of the duties and obligations owed by the employee to the employer. 871 IAC 24.32(1)a; *Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 275 N.W.2d 445 (Iowa 1979); *Henry v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 391 N.W.2d 731, 735 (Iowa App. 1986). The conduct must show a 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. 871 IAC 24.32(1)a; *Huntoon*, supra; *Henry*, supra. In contrast, 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(1)a; *Huntoon*, supra; *Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984).

The claimant's improper predocumentation of medication administration while under probation for prior medication administration errors shows a willful or wanton disregard of the standard of behavior the employer has the right to expect from an employee, as well as an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests and of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. The employer discharged the claimant for reasons amounting to work-connected misconduct.

DECISION:

The representative's February 12, 2013 decision (reference 01) is affirmed. The employer discharged the claimant for disqualifying reasons. The claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits as of January 14, 2013. This disqualification continues until the claimant has been paid ten times her weekly benefit amount for insured work, provided she is otherwise eligible. The employer's account will not be charged.

Lynette A. F. Donner
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

ld/pjs