

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

LYNNETE M DEAL
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 08A-UI-02199-M

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

MERCY HOSPITAL
Employer

OC: 01/27/08 R: 02
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated February 21, 2008, reference 01, which held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on March 25, 2008, at Des Moines. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Eddie Brown, Employee Relations, and Margo Adams, Supervisor, House of Mercy. Exhibits One through Six and A were admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on January 29, 2008.

Claimant was discharged on January 29, 2008 by employer because claimant made arrangements to take a client's child into her home as guardian. Claimant worked at a care facility for chemically dependent adults. Claimant had a professional relationship with a client. Claimant went beyond the bounds of being a care provider by taking on guardianship of a client's child. Claimant did not consult management before taking on guardianship of the client's child. Claimant had been warned on the issue of overextending professional boundaries. Claimant knew she was putting her job in jeopardy by taking guardianship of the client's child.

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.

In this matter, the evidence established that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning overextending professional boundaries. Claimant was warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, constitutes misconduct because claimant violated a known company rule after being warned that discharge would result. Claimant's failure to contact management before accepting guardianship of a client's child is evidence that she knew she might be violating policy. Claimant knew her job would be in jeopardy. Accepting guardianship of a client's child is a conflict in interest where the claimant was providing care for the parent. The administrative law judge holds that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct and, as such, is disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated February 21, 2008, reference 01, is affirmed. 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.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/kjw