

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**LINDA J STANLEY**

Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 09A-UI-08512-HT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY INC**

Employer

**OC: 04/19/09**

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

Section 96.5(2)a – Discharge

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer, Good Samaritan Society, filed an appeal from a decision dated June 4, 2009, reference 03. The decision allowed benefits to the claimant, Linda Stanely. After due notice was issued a hearing was held by telephone conference call on June 30, 2009. The claimant participated on her own behalf. The employer participated by Staff Development Coordinator Charlotte Gott, Director of Nursing Gwen Musick, Assistant Director of Nursing Erma Anderson and Administrator Layne Gross. Exhibits One, Two, and Three were admitted into the record.

**ISSUE:**

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

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Linda Stanley was employed by Good Samaritan from November 21, 2008 until February 3, 2009 as a full-time certified nursing assistant. She received copies of the employee handbook and addendums at the time she was hired.

On January 23, 2009, she received a final written warning regarding her attendance. She had missed work and had only one doctor's excuse to cover a period of time from January 1 through 4, 2009. She had been advised previously by Administrator Layne Gross she should have a doctor's excuse or police report to submit to the employer to excuse or explain her absences so the circumstances could be taken into consideration.

The claimant was absent on January 30, 2009, she called in to say she would be late but did not appear for work at any point that. On January 31, 2009, the claimant called to say she had been beaten up and would not be in to work. On February 1, 2009, she called extremely upset, crying hysterically and would not be in although the charge nurse could not understand any details. The claimant acknowledged she was caring for her sister who "jumped on" her, but from her testimony it was not clear whether her failure to come to work was due to any injuries or the need to care for her sister. She did not report the assault to the police and did not seek

medical attention and could not provide any of the requested documentation to the employer to excuse the absence.

The claimant returned to work on February 3, 2009, and was discharged for excessive absenteeism. She has received unemployment benefits since filing a claim with an effective date of April 19, 2009.

#### **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(7) provides:

(7) Excessive unexcused absenteeism. Excessive unexcused absenteeism is an intentional disregard of the duty owed by the claimant to the employer and shall be considered misconduct except for illness or other reasonable grounds for which the employee was absent and that were properly reported to the employer.

The claimant had been advised her job was in jeopardy as a result of her absenteeism. She had further been advised she would need documentation from police or medical personnel to submit to the employer to excuse the absences. In spite of the warnings and the receipt of the attendance policy, Ms. Stanley only provided one doctor's excuse for a four-day absence. The

employer did take that into consideration and she was given only one occurrence for the entire period.

The administrative law judge was not able to determine if the claimant's absences from January 30 through February 1, 2009, were due to physical injury or personal problems providing care for her sister. Without any documentation from police or a doctor, the claimant must be considered to have failed to rebut the employer's testimony that the absences were unexcused. Matters of purely personal consideration, such as family problems, are not considered an excused absence. *Harlan v. IDJS*, 350 N.W.2d 192 (Iowa 1984). 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 June 4, 2009, reference 03, is reversed. Linda Stanley is disqualified and benefits are withheld until she has earned ten times her weekly benefit amount,

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