

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

OLIVIA STAHeli
Claimant

CATHOLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES-IOWA
Employer

APPEAL 20A-UI-08138-HP-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 04/26/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quitting
Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant Olivia Staheli filed an appeal from a July 1, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits for voluntarily quitting her work with Catholic Health Initiatives-Iowa (“CHI”) on March 6, 2020. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on August 25, 2020. Staheli appeared and testified. No one appeared on behalf of CHI. Exhibit 1 was admitted into the record. I also took administrative notice of the claimant’s unemployment insurance benefits records maintained by Iowa Workforce Development.

ISSUE:

Was the separation a layoff, discharge for misconduct or voluntary quit without good cause?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Staheli commenced full-time employment as a primary counselor with CHI at the House of Mercy on March 24, 2017. Staheli provided substance abuse and mental health therapy. Her direct supervisor was Kendrah Parker.

On January 30, 2020, Staheli provided a written resignation letter to Parker, informing CHI she was resigning effective March 6, 2020, because she had secured employment with Kalm Therapy Group. Parker wished her well. Staheli resigned on March 6, 2020.

Staheli commenced employment with Kalm Therapy Group on March 24, 2020. Due to Covid-19, Staheli did not have a full caseload and her hours were reduced by seventy-five percent.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.5(1) provides an individual “shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual’s wage credits: . . . If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual’s employer, if so found by the department.” The Iowa Supreme Court has held a “voluntary quit” means discontinuing the employment because the

employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer.” *Wills v. Emp’t Appeal Bd.*, 447 N.W.2d 137, 138 (Iowa 1989). A voluntary quit requires “an intention to terminate the employment relationship accompanied by an overt act carrying out the intent.” *Peck v. Emp’t Appeal Bd.*, 492 N.W.2d 438, 440 (Iowa Ct. App. 1992). “Good cause” for leaving employment must be that which is reasonable to the average person, not the overly sensitive individual or the claimant in particular. *Uniweld Products v. Indus. Relations Comm’n*, 277 So.2d 827 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. 1973). The claimant has the burden of proving that the voluntary leaving was for good cause attributable to the employer. Iowa Code § 96.6(2). The employer has the burden of proving that a claimant’s departure from employment was voluntary. *Irving v. Emp’t Appeal Bd.*, 883 N.W.2d 179 (Iowa 2016).

871 Iowa Administrative Code -24.25 provides:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated.

Staheli resigned from CHI to accept a position with the Kalm Therapy Group. Due to Covid-19, Staheli’s hours were reduced by seventy-five percent at Kalm Therapy Group. Staheli’s reason for leaving CHI was not for a reason attributable to CHI. Benefits are denied.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (“PUA”) Under the Federal CARES Act

Even though the claimant is not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits under state law, the claimant may be eligible for federally funded unemployment insurance benefits under the CARES Act. Section 2102 of the CARES Act creates a new temporary federal program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (“PUA”) that may provide up to 39 weeks of unemployment benefits. An individual receiving PUA benefits may also receive an additional \$600 weekly benefit amount under the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (“FPUC”) program if the individual is eligible for PUA benefits for the week claimed. The FPUC additional \$600 payment per week ends as of July 25th in Iowa. This means the \$600 weekly additional benefit will stop and at this time, no extension or change to the program has been made by Congress at this time. This does mean that you will see a corresponding decrease in your weekly benefit amount. The FPUC payments are not a state benefit and Iowa is unable to make any changes to the availability of this benefit. If a change takes place to this benefit in the future, IWD will share on the IWD website and social media. This decision does not address whether the claimant is eligible for PUA. If the claimant wishes to receive PUA benefits, the claimant must apply for PUA, as noted in the instructions provided in the “Note to Claimant” below:

Note to Claimant: If this decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits and you disagree with this decision, you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits, but who are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (“PUA”). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program. Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.** This decision denies benefits. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

DECISION:

Regular Unemployment Insurance Benefits Under State Law

The July 1, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision denying unemployment insurance benefits is affirmed. Claimant voluntarily quit the claimant's employment with the employer on March 6, 2020. Unemployment insurance benefits are denied until the claimant has worked in and earned wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount after the claimant's separation date, and provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.



Heather L. Palmer
Administrative Law Judge
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August 31, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

hlp/mh