

**WEST VIRGINIA
SECRETARY OF STATE
KEN HECHLER
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION**

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FILED

AUG 3 1 43 PM '00

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WEST VIRGINIA

Form #3

**NOTICE OF AGENCY APPROVAL OF A PROPOSED RULE
AND
FILING WITH THE LEGISLATIVE RULE-MAKING REVIEW COMMITTEE**

AGENCY: West Virginia Bd. of Exam. for Registered Prof. Nurses FILE NUMBER: 19

CITE AUTHORITY: §30-1-4

AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING RULE: YES NO

IF YES, SERIES NUMBER OF RULE BEING AMENDED: Series 9

TITLE OF RULE BEING AMENDED: "Disciplinary Action"

IF NO, SERIES NUMBER OF RULE BEING PROPOSED: _____

TITLE OF RULE BEING PROPOSED: _____

THE ABOVE PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE RULE HAVING GONE TO A PUBLIC HEARING OR A PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD IS HEREBY APPROVED BY THE PROMULGATING AGENCY FOR FILING WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE LEGISLATIVE RULE-MAKING REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR THEIR REVIEW.


Authorized Signature

- e. Date you filed in State Register the agency approved proposed Legislative Rule following public hearing: (be exact)

August 3, 2000

- f. Name, title, address and **phone/fax/e-mail numbers** of agency person(s) to receive all *written correspondence* regarding this rule: (Please type)

Laura Skidmore Rhodes, MSN, RN Executive Secretary (304) 558-3596

West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses
101 Dee Drive

Charleston, WV 25311-1620

Fax: (304) 558-3666

- g. **IF DIFFERENT FROM ITEM 'f'**, please give **Name, title, address and phone number(s)** of agency person(s) who wrote and/or has responsibility for the contents of this rule: (Please type)
-
-
-
-

3. If the statute under which you promulgated the submitted rules requires certain findings and determinations to be made as a condition precedent to their promulgation:

- a. Give the date upon which you filed in the State Register a notice of the time and place of a hearing for the taking of evidence and a general description of the issues to be decided.

b. Date of hearing or comment period:

c. On what date did you file in the State Register the findings and determinations required together with the reasons therefor?

d. Attach findings and determinations and reasons:

Attached

Laura S. Rhodes, M.S.N., R.N.
Executive Secretary



TELEPHONE:
(304) 558-3596
(304) 558-3728
FAX (304) 558-3666

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL NURSES
101 Dee Drive
Charleston, WV 25311-1620

The Honorable Ken Heckler
Secretary of State
Building 1, Suite 157-K
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Charleston, WV 25305-0770

Dear Mr. Heckler:

The Board in session June 13-15, 2000 approved for filing proposed legislative rule 19CSR9 titled Disciplinary Action.

A brief summary of the rule follows:

This legislative rule outlines the complaint process followed by the West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses (Board). It outlines what conduct the Board considers to be professional misconduct and the resulting disciplinary action that could be taken against a licensee if found guilty of such conduct. The rule also allows for an impaired nurse treatment program to be established by the Board and provides for the expungement of dismissed complaints from the file of a licensee after a three (3) year period, with no other complaints being filed within that time.

A statement of circumstances requiring the rule follows:

Pursuant to HB 4062 the Board was mandated to provide a legislative rule on the complaint process followed by the Board. This process informs the public of the Board's role in receiving, investigating, reviewing and resolving complaints. Although the Board already followed the process which is outlined in this rule pertaining to the processing of complaints, its previous disciplinary rule did not specifically outline the complaint process.

Should you have any questions or require further information, do not hesitate to contact me.

For the Board,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura S. Rhodes".

Laura S. Rhodes, MSN, RN
Executive Secretary

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

FISCAL NOTE FOR PROPOSED RULES

Rule Title: Disciplinary Action

Type of Rule: Legislative Interpretive Procedural

Agency: West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurse

Address: 101 Dee Drive

Charleston, WV 25311-1620

1. Effect of Proposed rule:

	ANNUAL FISCAL YEAR				
	INCREASE	DECREASE	CURRENT	NEXT	THEREAFTER
ESTIMATED TOTAL COST	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
PERSONAL SERVICES	No Change				
CURRENT EXPENSE	No Change				
REPAIRS & ALTERATIONS	none				
EQUIPMENT	none				
OTHER					

2. Explanation of Above Estimates:

The amendments to this rule will not change the current level of expenditures for implementation of disciplinary action.

3. Objectives of These Rules:

To further outline the complaint procedure followed by the West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses.

Rule Title: Disciplinary Action

4. Explanation of Overall Economic Impact of Proposed Rule:

A. Economic Impact on State Government:

None

B. Economic Impact on Political Subdivisions; Specific Industries; Specific Groups of Citizens:

None

C. Economic Impact on Citizens/Public at Large.

None

Date: June 22, 2000

Signature of Agency Head or Authorized Representative:

Laura Adamson Rhodes

**TITLE 19
LEGISLATIVE RULES
WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL NURSES**

SERIES 9

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

FILED
AUG 3 1 48 PM '00
OFFICE OF WEST VIRGINIA
SECRETARY OF STATE

§19-9-1. General.

1.1. Scope.- This rule defines the role and authority of the board in investigation and resolution of disciplinary matters.

1.2. Authority.-W.VA. CODE §30-1-4.

1.3. Filing Date.-

1.4. Effective Date.-

§19-9-2 Definitions.

2.1. The following words and phrases as used in this rule have the following meanings, unless the context otherwise requires:

2.1.a "Board" means the West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses.

2.2.b "Complaint" refers to any written, verbal, or other communication with the board or its representatives which indicates or tends to indicate that a licensee is acting or has acted in violation of West Virginia Code §30-7-1 et seq. or §30-15-1 et seq., or rules governing the practice of registered professional nursing.

2.3.c "Impaired" refers to the condition of a licensee whose performance or behavior is altered through the use of alcohol, drugs, or other means.

2.4.d "Proof" refers to all types of evidence except testimony, including but not limited to records, documents, exhibits, concrete objects, laboratory or other tests, and the reports of results of examinations or laboratory or other tests.

2.5.e "Structured treatment program" refers to a program for physical, psychological, social and/or spiritual rehabilitation, if the program has been expressly approved by the board.

2.6.f "Testimony" refers to evidence given by a witness under oath or affirmation, including but not limited to oral statements, affidavits, or depositions.

2.g. "Good Professional Character" means the integrated pattern of personal, academic and occupational behaviors which, in the judgment of the Board, indicates that an individual is able to consistently conform his or her conduct to the requirements of the Nursing Practice Act, the Board's rules and regulations, and generally accepted standards of nursing practice including, but not limited to, behaviors indicating honesty, accountability, trustworthiness, reliability and integrity.

§19-9-3 Complaint Procedures

3.1. The Board will accept a complaint from any individual against one or more licensees.

3.2. The complaint may be written or verbal. The Board may accept anonymous complaints if the complaint provides enough information to begin an investigation. The Board may provide a form for the purpose of completing a complaint. Complaints shall include the following:

3.2.a. name and address of the licensee against whom the complaint is being filed;

3.2.b. the alleged violation which prompted the complaint;

3.2.c. the date or dates of the incident prompting the complaint;

3.2.d. any supporting documents related to the alleged violation; and

3.2.e. the name, address and telephone numbers of any and all witnesses to the incident.

3.3. The Board shall maintain a log of all complaints, indicating date of receipt, license number of nurse against whom the complaint is filed and the name of individual filing the complaint.

3.4. The registered professional nurse shall file a complaint with the board no later than thirty (30) days after an alleged violation has occurred.

3.5. Complainants are immune from liability for the allegations contained in their complaints filed with the Board unless the complaint is filed in bad faith or for a malicious purpose.

3.6. The Board or its representatives shall gather necessary information to determine the validity of the complaint. All necessary investigative techniques, including but not limited to, subpoenas and interviewing potential witnesses, shall be utilized.

3.7. The complainant shall be sent an acknowledgment stating one or more of the following:

3.7.a. The allegations are being reviewed by the board; or

3.7.b. The allegations are beyond the jurisdiction of the board; or

3.7.c. More information is required in order to fully investigate the complaint.

3.8. The licensee shall be sent a Notice of Complaint containing the allegations. The licensee shall have fourteen (14) days to respond to the allegations. The licensee shall also be sent a copy of the complaint filed against his/her license and any supporting documents filed with the complaint.

3.9. Board staff shall review all information received, including subpoenaed information, and determine if further investigation is necessary, if disciplinary action is warranted or if the case needs to be referred to the Disciplinary Review Committee (DRC) for review and/or dismissal.

3.9.a. The DRC may dismiss a case, direct staff to further investigate the allegations or determine the disciplinary action that should be taken against the license.

3.10. Board staff may negotiate terms of consent agreements if probable cause for disciplinary action is warranted.

3.10.a. The DRC shall review all consent agreements for approval and signature; it can reject the consent agreement or request modifications to the consent agreement.

3.11. If the DRC rejects the consent agreement and the licensee rejects the DRC's modifications, if any, staff shall set the case for hearing.

3.12. If the licensee contests the allegations and refuses to enter into a consent agreement, Board staff shall set the case for hearing.

§19-9-3 4 Investigation.

~~3.1.~~ 4.1 Upon complaint or on its own initiative, the board or its employees or designees may investigate conduct which is occurring or has occurred which would violate West Virginia Code §30-7-1 et seq., §30-15-1 et seq., or rules governing the practice of registered professional nursing.

~~3.2.~~ 4.2 For the purposes of an investigation by the board:

~~3.2.1.~~ 4.2.a. The executive secretary or assistant executive secretary may subpoena witnesses and documents and administer oaths;

~~3.2.2~~ 4.2.b. The board or its authorized agents may depose witnesses, take sworn statements and collect other evidence;

~~4.2.c.~~ 4.2.c. The board may require a criminal history records check to be paid for by the licensee. The licensee under investigation shall furnish to the agency a full set of fingerprints for purposes of conducting a criminal history record check. Records are checked through the criminal identification bureau of the West Virginia State Police, a similar agency within the licensee's state of residence, and the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation. Disciplinary action may be taken against the licensee for refusing to submit to the criminal history records check.

~~3.2.3~~ 4.2.d The board may institute proceedings in the courts of this state to enforce its subpoenas for the production of witnesses and documents and its orders and to restrain and enjoin violations of West Virginia Code §30-7-1 et seq., §30-15-1 et seq., or rules governing the practice of registered professional nursing;

~~3.2.4~~ 4.2.e. The board shall review pertinent medical records during the course of its investigation, and shall remove patient identifying information from records which are introduced as evidence at any disciplinary hearing;

~~3.2.5~~ 4.2.f. The board, or its employees or designees within the limits of authority granted by the board, may employ investigators, consultants and other employees as may be necessary to assist in an investigation;

~~3.2.6~~ 4.2.g. All powers of the board and its employees or designees may be exercised to investigate a matter, even if a hearing or disciplinary action does not result from the investigative findings;

~~3-2-7. 4.2.h.~~ Upon a finding of probable cause that a basis for disciplinary action exists, the board may require a registered professional nurse or a person applying for licensure to practice as a registered professional nurse in this state to submit to a physical or psychological examination by a practitioner approved by the board. Any individual who applies for or accepts the privilege of practicing as a registered professional nurse in this state is considered to have given consent to submit to all such examinations when requested to do so in writing by the board and to have waived all objections to the admissibility of the testimony or examination report of any examining practitioner on the ground that the testimony or report is privileged communication. If an applicant or licensee fails or refuses to submit to any examination under circumstances which the board finds are not beyond his or her control, such failure is prima facie evidence of his or her inability to practice as a registered professional nurse competently and in accordance with accepted standards for professional practice. A registered professional nurse or person applying for licensure as a registered professional nurse who is adversely affected by this provision may request a hearing within thirty days of any action taken by the board.

§19-9-4 5 Disciplinary Action

54.1. The board has the authority to deny, revoke, suspend, or otherwise discipline a licensee or applicant for licensure upon proof that the licensee or applicant for licensure has violated the provisions of West Virginia Code § 30-7-1 et seq.

54.1.1.a. The board shall afford every person subject to disciplinary proceedings an opportunity for a hearing, as set forth in the board's rule regarding Contested Case Hearing Procedure, 19 CSR 5;

54.1.2.b If an applicant for licensure or a licensee fails to appear at a scheduled hearing or fails to reply to the notification of hearing, the charges specified may be taken as true and the board may proceed with the disciplinary action;

54.1.3.c Following a hearing before the board or its hearing examiner, the board will issue its decision on any disciplinary matter;

54.1.4.d The board may establish a committee that has the authority to resolve disciplinary matters through a formal consent agreement with a licensee, permitting the licensee to voluntarily agree to disciplinary action in lieu of a formal evidentiary hearing.

54.1.5.e The board or its authorized committee may take disciplinary action which includes, but is not limited to, the denial, suspension, or revocation of a license to practice as a registered professional nurse, or probation of a registered professional nursing license with terms to be met for continued practice, or the assessment of additional renewal, reinstatement, or ~~monitoring fees administrative costs or fines or costs~~ against a licensee, or a combination of these or other actions. ~~A fee assessed at the time of suspension or revocation of a license is due at the time the licensee requests reinstatement of the license. A fee imposed in conjunction with penalties other than the suspension of the license is due and payable within six (6) months of the date of the order assessing the fee. A licensee who fails to pay a fee assessed by the board as a part of a disciplinary proceeding within the time period contained in this rule or as otherwise agreed upon between the parties is not eligible for renewal of the license until the fee is paid. A licensee who fails to pay a fine or administrative cost assessed as part of disciplinary proceedings or settlement thereof within the time period agreed upon between the parties shall be disciplined or shall remain under the disciplinary terms until the fine and administrative costs are paid in full.~~

54.1.6.f If the board finds that public health, safety and welfare requires emergency action and incorporates a finding to that effect into its order, the board shall order summary suspension of a license pending proceedings for revocation or other action. The board shall promptly institute and determine further disciplinary action.

§19-9-5 6 Professional Misconduct

65.1. Pursuant to West Virginia Code § 30-7-11(f), the board is authorized to take disciplinary action against an applicant or licensee upon proof that the individual "[i]s guilty of conduct derogatory to the morals or standing of the profession of registered nursing." The board determines that the following conduct, including, but not limited to the following, if proven by a preponderance of evidence, constitutes professional misconduct subject to disciplinary action pursuant to West Virginia Code § 30-7-11(f):

65.1.1.a failed to adhere to common and current standards for professional nursing practice, including but not limited to standards established by a national professional nursing organization, nursing research, nursing education, or the board;

65.1.2.b failed to adhere to established standards in the practice setting to safeguard patient care;

65.1.3.c committed knowingly an act which could adversely affect the physical or psychological welfare of a patient;

65.1.4.d abandoned patients by terminating responsibility for nursing care, intervention, or observation without properly notifying appropriate personnel and ensuring the safety of patients;

65.1.5.e ~~practicing~~ or ~~offer~~ed to practice beyond the scope permitted by law or ~~accept~~ed and ~~perform~~ing professional responsibilities that the nurse knows or has reason to know that he or she is not licensed, qualified, or competent to perform;

65.1.6f. ~~impersonat~~ing another licensed practitioner;

65.1.7.g ~~permitt~~ing another person to use the licensee's license for any purpose;

65.1.8.h ~~permitt~~ing, ~~aid~~ing, or ~~abet~~ting an unlicensed, uncertified, or unregistered person to perform activities requiring a license, certificate, or registration;

65.1.9.i ~~delegat~~ing professional responsibilities to a person when the registered professional nurse delegating such responsibilities knows or has reason to know that person is not qualified by training, experience or licensure to perform them;

65.1.10.j ~~practic~~ing registered professional nursing while the license is suspended, lapsed, or inactive;

65.1.11.k ~~fail~~ing to comply with terms and conditions as may be imposed by the board based upon previous disciplinary action of the board;

65.1.12.l ~~practic~~ing professional nursing while the ability to safely and effectively practice is compromised by alcohol or drugs;

6.1.m. ~~became addicted to a controlled substance;~~

6.1.n. ~~became a chronic or persistent alcoholic;~~

6.1.o. ~~engaged in dishonorable, unethical or unprofessional conduct of a character likely to deceive, defraud or harm the public or any member thereof; thus, not exercising good professional character;~~

65.1.13.p practicing professional nursing while the ability to safely and effectively practice is compromised by physical or mental disability;

65.1.14.q refusing or failing to report for a physical or mental examination, including but not limited to laboratory or other tests, requested by the board;

65.1.15.r providing false or incorrect information to an employer or potential employer regarding the status of a license, or failing to inform an employer or potential employer of a change in the status of a license;

65.1.16.s knowingly falsifying an application for employment;

65.1.17.t knowingly providing false information regarding completion of educational programs;

65.1.18.u falsifying patient records or intentionally charting incorrectly;

65.1.19.v improperly, incompletely, or illegibly documenting the delivery of nursing care, including but not limited to treatment or medication;

65.1.20.w knowingly making or filing a false report;

65.1.21.x knowingly or negligently failing to file a report or record required by state or federal law;

65.1.22.y willfully impeding or obstructing the filing of a report or record required by state or federal law;

65.1.23.z inducing another person to file a false report, failed to file a report required by state or federal law, or obstructed the filing of a report required by state or federal law;

65.1.24.aa ~~failinged~~ to report to the board the incompetent, unethical, illegal, or impaired practice of a registered professional nurse;

65.1.25.bb ~~failinged~~ to report through proper channels the incompetent, unethical, illegal, or impaired practice of another person who ~~providinged~~ health care;

65.1.26.cc ~~impedinged~~ or ~~obstructinged~~ an investigation by the board by ~~failinged~~ failure to comply or respond to requests for action or information, whether such failure is ~~was~~ ~~knowingn~~ or negligent;

65.1.27.dd ~~violatinged~~ any provision of West Virginia Code §30-7-1 et seq., or rules governing the practice of registered professional nursing, or a rule or order of the board, or ~~failinged~~ to comply with a subpoena or subpoena duces tecum issued by the board;

65.1.28.ee ~~failinged~~ to register or notify the board of any changes of name or mailing address;

6.1.ff. ~~failed to accept certified mail from the board, when mailed to the licensee's last address on record in the board's office;~~

65.1.29.gg ~~failinged~~ to disclose to the board a criminal conviction in any jurisdiction;

65.1.30.hh ~~convictioned~~ of a misdemeanor with substantial relationship to the practice of registered professional nursing, in a court of competent jurisdiction.

65.1.34.ii ~~failinged~~ to disclose to the board treatment or counseling for substance abuse, or participation in any professional peer assistance program;

~~65.1.32.jj~~ providing false information on an application for licensure by examination or endorsement, or an application for renewal, or any other document submitted to the board for the purpose of licensure, advanced practice recognition, or prescriptive authority;

~~65.1.33.kk~~ misappropriating medications, supplies, or personal items of a patient or employer;

~~65.1.34.ll~~ self-administering or otherwise taking into the body any prescription drug in any way not in accordance with a legal, valid prescription or the use of any illicit drug;

~~65.1.35.mm~~ prescribing, dispensing, administering, mixing or otherwise preparing a prescription drug, including any controlled substance under state or federal law, other than in good faith and in a therapeutic manner not in accordance with accepted nursing practice standards and in the course of professional nursing practice, or not in accordance with the board's rule governing prescriptive authority, 19 CSR 8;

~~65.1.36.nn~~ physically or verbally abusing, or failing to provide adequate protection or safety for an incapacitated individual in the context of a nurse-patient/client relationship;

~~65.1.37.oo~~ using the nurse-patient/client relationship to exploit a patient or client;

~~65.1.38.pp~~ exercising influence or advantage within a nurse-patient/client relationship for the purpose of engaging a patient or client in sexual activity or becoming romantically involved with a patient or client while still responsible for the care of that patient;

6.1.qq. failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the nurse-patient/client relationship;

6.1.rr. failed to report that his or her license to practice registered professional nursing in any other state, territory, jurisdiction or foreign nation was revoked, suspended, restricted or limited, or otherwise acted against, or has been subjected to any other disciplinary action by the licensing authority thereof, or has been denied licensure in any other state, territory, jurisdiction, or foreign nation;

6.1.ss. practiced registered professional nursing by way of telecommunications or otherwise, in any other state, territory, jurisdiction, or foreign nation, without a license to do so and not in accordance with the law of that state, territory jurisdiction, or foreign nation.

65.2. ~~Found~~A finding of guilty for improper professional practice or professional misconduct by a duly authorized professional disciplinary agency or licensing or certifying body or board in this or another state or territory, where the conduct upon which the finding was based would, if committed in this state, constitute professional misconduct under the laws of this state, may serve as a basis for disciplinary action by this board.

§19-9-6 7 Impaired Nurse Treatment Program

76.1. Pursuant to West Virginia Code § 30-7-11, the board has the authority to deny, revoke, suspend, or otherwise discipline an applicant or licensee upon proof of prohibited conduct.

Pursuant to that authority, the board may permit the licensee or applicant for licensure to participate in a structured treatment program and meet other terms and conditions for continued licensure, in lieu of disciplinary action.

76.1.1.a Participation in an approved treatment program may be monitored by a designee of the board;

76.1.2.b The board may allow an applicant or licensee that remains in compliance with the terms of an approved treatment program, to the satisfaction of the board's designee, to not appear before the board or hearing examiner to respond further to charges of misconduct;

76.1.3.c An applicant or licensee that failed to comply with the terms of an approved treatment program, to the satisfaction of the board's designee, may be subject to further disciplinary action to the fullest extent of the board's authority;

76.2. The board may establish or approve impaired nurse treatment programs.

§19-9-8 Expungement of Records.

8.1 All complaints that are dismissed by the DRC shall be expunged upon request by the licensee from the licensee's file after three (3) years, if no other complaint is received against the same licensee within the three (3) year period.

Facsimile Cover Sheet

To: WU Board of RN
Company:
Phone: 304 558 3596
Fax:

From: Fay Wojtowicz, RNC, Cn
Company:
Phone: 304-469-9628
Fax: 304-469-6284

Date: 7/22/00
Pages including this cover page: 2

Comments: Comments on disciplinary rules

To WV Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses

From L. Fay Wojtowicz, RNC, Cm



Subject Disciplinary Rule for Public Comment

Date July 22, 2000

Section 3.4 is not clear. Is this a licensee's complaint against another licensee? Why should a time limit of thirty days be placed on her complaint? Why not a longer time limit? Why not a time limit for a public individual's complaint?

Section 4.2.c should be deleted. A licensee should have a right to refuse to be fingerprinted if he is not a criminal, has not committed a crime related to the complaint, and has not been arrested for the complaint. Criminals are not fingerprinted before an arrest.

Why should a licensee have to pay for his own criminal background check if he is not a criminal? Why should he have to pay for his own prosecution? A licensee should be innocent until proven guilty. A licensee should not have to pay for the prosecution or the defense of an alleged violation unless the misconduct is proven and the discipline decided and declared.

Disciplinary action should not be taken against a licensee for refusing to do and pay for his own prosecution. An arrested criminal does not have to pay for his background check and prosecution.

In Section 4.2.e the medical records of the licensee should not be compromised unless accessed through consent and appropriate legal authorities.

In section 4.2.f the Board should not be allowed to charge a licensee for the cost of investigators, consultants and other employees if a hearing or disciplinary action does not result.

In Section 54.1.5e a licensee should not have to pay for fines or administrative cost as part of non-disciplinary action. Discipline should not be necessary for failure to pay fees for non-disciplinary action. Are there protections for frivolous allegations? Are there protections for a licensee from personal and monetary expense and harassment from defense of a frivolous allegation?

Laura S. Rhodes, M.S.N., R.N.
Executive Secretary



TELEPHONE:
(304) 558-3596
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FAX (304) 558-3666

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL NURSES
101 Dee Drive
Charleston, WV 25311-1620

July 31, 2000

L. Fay Wojtowicz, RNC, Cm
West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Building 10 - Holly Grove
Charleston, WV 25305-0160

Dear Ms. Wojtowicz:

Thank you for the written comments you submitted to the Board regarding the proposed changes to the Series 9 Discipline Rule. Responses to your questions will be provided in the order in which they appear in your correspondence.

You indicated the Section 3.4 is not clear. This portion of the rule is to encourage and require the prompt reporting of an alleged violation of the law. The Board has jurisdiction over registered professional nurses, therefore the requirement is specific to those individuals the Board regulates. This should provide the opportunity to investigate the matter and submit necessary information to the Board for investigation. Prompt filing of a complaint and prompt investigation are key in protecting the public.

Regarding fingerprinting review of an applicant's criminal background or lack thereof is a national trend with regulatory agencies. When persons do not fully disclose their criminal history and then are licensed, there is a high potential for the public to be placed at risk. Criminal background checks will assist the Board in fully evaluating persons desiring to be licensed as a registered professional nurse.

Section 4.2.e, speaks to obtaining medical records pertinent to the investigation of the allegations in the complaint. These records are obtained with appropriate legal consent or through subpoena. Patient identifying information is removed from the record in order to maintain confidentiality.

Response to Proposed Rule Changes

Section 4.2.f. speaks to the Board's power to hire persons to assist with the processing of complaints. The Board is charged with assuring public safety through the regulation of the practice of the registered professional nurse. Providing appropriate manpower to be successful in this charge is a necessity. Funding for this is provided in the Board's budget.

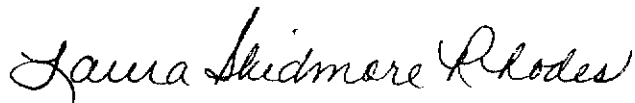
Section 5.1.e relates to fines and administrative costs. The legislature passed a law several years ago giving boards the authority to assess fines and administrative costs in discipline cases. When a complaint is dismissed the licensee is not assessed a fine or an administrative fee. When a complaint results in disciplinary action a fine and administrative fee are assessed. An individual licensee may personally incur costs related to hiring an attorney or providing information to the Board.

The Board did amend the language in Section 5.1.e to make it clearer. The last sentence was amended to read as follows: A licensee who fails to pay a fine or administrative costs assessed as part of a disciplinary *proceeding or settlement thereof*, within the time period agreed upon between the parties, may be disciplined or may remain under the disciplinary terms until the fine and administrative costs are paid in full. The italicized words indicate the new language.

Many of the sections for which you provided comment are sections that are part of the current rule. Please be assured that the Board investigates all complaints in a manner to obtain complete information and make a decision regarding the registered professional nurse's ability to safely provide nursing care to the citizens of West Virginia.

Your comments were very thought provoking. Thank you for taking the time to read the rule and provide input. I hope this response is helpful to you.

For the Board,



Laura Skidmore Rhodes, MSN, RN
Executive Secretary

xc: file

FAX TRANSMITTAL FORM

DATE: July 24, 2000 NUMBER OF PAGES: 2

TO: 558-3666
WV Board of Professional Nurses

FROM: Karen D. Shaffer

MESSAGE: Public Comment on Proposed
Changes to Title 19 Series 9
Disciplinary Rules

If you have difficulty with this transmission , please call (304) 394-5807/fax (304) 394-5953.

**Karen D. Shaffer
RD#2, Box 159
Wellsburg, West Virginia 26070
Telephone: 304-394-5807
Fax: 304-394-59953**

West Virginia Board of Examiners for
Registered Professional Nurses
101 Dee Drive
Charleston, West Virginia 25311-1620

July 24, 2000

Dear Board Members:

Regarding the proposed changes to Title 19 Series 9 Disciplinary Rules, please consider the following comments. The broad scope of changes raises concerns on the increased authority being given to the Nursing Board members.

Section 2.g "Good Professional Character," is judgmental and should not be used by a board as a method to discipline the members.

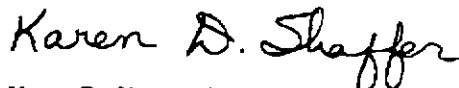
It is a concern that the changes will grant the Board greater power to mandate a nurse comply even where there are only a complaint (3.1. --3.12) filed. This power will be used even if the complaint has been anonymous. To require finger printing, medical and/or psychological examination along with the accused nurse to submit personnel information is removing the basic rights of being a citizen of the United States.

Should a nurse decline to provide any requested documentation or refuse to submit to testing it will grant the board the power to revoke the professional license even before there is proof of any misconduct. This authority should not be granted so quickly and freely. It not only places a financial hardship on the accused. it also places an emotion burden when there may be no justification for any action by the board.

There is also the problematic issue of keeping a personal file on a nurse for years even if the allegations were found to be false. It makes little difference that the accused is supplied a copy of the complaint after the fact of being forced to comply with the boards demands.

Please reconsider the above issues before signing away many of the basic liberties of all West Virginia Professional Nurses. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Karen D. Shaffer, BS, BA, RN.C., Cm

Laura S. Rhodes, M.S.N., R.N.
Executive Secretary



TELEPHONE:
(304) 558-3596
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STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL NURSES

101 Dee Drive
Charleston, WV 25311-1620

July 31, 2000

Karen D. Shaffer
RD #2, Box 159
Wellsburg, WV 26070

Dear Ms. Shaffer:

This is in response to your written comments regarding the proposed rule changes to Series 9 Discipline. I will address your concerns in the order in which they appear in your letter.

Regarding the definition "Good Professional Character", you are correct in that judgment is required in making the determination of "Good Professional Character". In reviewing issues related to human behavior the element of judgment will always be present. The information provided and obtained during an investigation is reviewed thoroughly such that informed decisions and judgements can be made about a registered professional nurse's ability to safely engage in the practice of nursing. This is an essential component the Board incorporates in fulfilling the mission to protect the citizens of West Virginia through the regulation of registered professional nurses.

The language related to a licensee's refusal to submit to an exam or testing has been in place for at least five (5) years. This request is not made very often nor taken lightly. Before the requirement can be made of a licensee, the Board must have "probable cause", which means enough evidence to support a violation of the law. There are times the Board has required a psychological exam after determining that there is probable cause that the licensee is a threat to public safety and the Board paid for the examination. If a drug screen is requested and is returned with a negative result, the Board pays for the drug screen. The Board takes seriously the effects a complaint has on the person receiving the complaint and does not issue frivolous requests for unnecessary tests or exams.

Requests for documents are made only if the documents are needed to fully investigate the complaint. It is in the nurse's best interest to provide all information believed important in responding to a complaint.

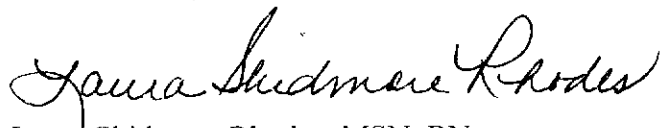
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Response to Proposed Rule Changes

Maintenance of records currently includes the practice of keeping complaints and related documents in the licensee file forever. The new language provides that individuals can request the removal of this information if the complaint was dismissed and a period of three years has passed and no other complaint has been filed.

I hope this response with the Board's interpretation of the rule is helpful to you. Thank you for taking the time to read the rule and provide comments.

For the Board,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Skidmore Rhodes".

Laura Skidmore Rhodes, MSN, RN
Executive Secretary

xc: file

Amendment to the Rule

As a result of a comment received the Board changed the Proposed Rule. The following paragraph is the original form of the Proposed Rule.

54.1.5.e The board or its authorized committee may take disciplinary action which includes, but is not limited to, the denial, suspension, or revocation of a license to practice as a registered professional nurse, or probation of a registered professional nursing license with terms to be met for continued practice, or the assessment of additional renewal, reinstatement, or monitoring fees administrative costs or fines or costs against a licensee, or a combination of these or other actions. A fee assessed at the time of suspension or revocation of a license is due at the time the licensee requests reinstatement of the license. A fee imposed in conjunction with penalties other than the suspension of the license is due and payable within six (6) months of the date of the order assessing the fee. A licensee who fails to pay a fee assessed by the board as a part of a disciplinary proceeding within the time period contained in this rule or as otherwise agreed upon between the parties is not eligible for renewal of the license until the fee is paid. A licensee who fails to pay a fine or administrative cost assessed as part of disciplinary action or non-disciplinary action within the time period agreed upon between the parties shall be disciplined or shall remain under the disciplinary terms until the fine and administrative costs are paid in full.

The change was made to the last sentence and is as follows:

A licensee who fails to pay a fine or administrative cost assessed as part of disciplinary *proceedings or settlement thereof* within the time period agreed upon between the parties shall be disciplined or shall remain under the disciplinary terms until the fine and administrative costs are paid in full.

The words in italics indicate the change. The Board sees this language as making is clearer that costs are assessed to persons who have violated the law, not to persons against whom the complaint is dismissed.