

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

630 Camp Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
General Correspondence Address: Post Office Box 30250, New Orleans, LA 70190-0250
www.lsbme.org



Telephone: (504) 568-6820
FAX: (504) 568-8893
Writer's Direct Dial:

Ext. _____

BEFORE THE LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

**NUMBER: 06-A-005
IN THE MATTER OF:**

**LETATIA NORRIS, PA-C.
(Certificate No. A10561)**

OPINION AND ORDER

This matter comes before the Board pursuant to an Administrative Complaint charging Respondent, Letatia Norris, PA-C, with a number of violations of the Physician Assistants Practice Act, R. S. 37:1360.21 -1360.38. The matter was heard before a panel of the Board consisting of Drs. Dawson, Amusa, Sheppard, and LeBlanc, President.

In the Administrative Complaint, Respondent is charged with:

1. Practicing without a license, in violation of R. S. 37:1360.33(3), R. S. 37:1360.35B, and La. Admin. C. 46:4513A(16) and 1505A, which proscribe practicing as a Physicians Assistant without qualifying as such, and without being the holder of a current license as a Physicians Assistant.

2. Engaging in the unauthorized practice of medicine, in violation of R. S. 37:1360.35(1-3), and La. Admin. Code 46:1505B, which provide that practicing as a Physicians Assistant without a license constitutes the unauthorized practice of medicine.
3. Issuing unlawful prescriptions, in violation of La. Admin. C 46:4504E(2).
4. Issuing prescriptions without a patient specific order of a supervising physician, in violation of La. Admin. C. 46:4505D.
5. Exercising independent judgment and practicing without supervision, in violation of R. S. 37:1360.31A(1), La. Admin. C. 46:4505E(1 and 4).
6. Attempting to deceive or defraud the public, by signing the name of her supervising physician to prescriptions, signing his name with her initials, or calling in prescriptions to pharmacies, in violation of La. Admin. C. 46:4513A(8).
7. By failing to insure patients' charts were reviewed, countersigned, and dated by her supervising physician within 72 hours, in violation of La. Admin. C. 46:4505D and 4511A(4).
8. By holding herself out as "Doctor" or failure to clearly identify herself as a Physicians Assistant, in violation of R. S. 37:1360.33(8) and La. Admin. C. 46:4505E(6) and 4511A(3).
9. Continuing to practice as a Physicians Assistant without a supervising physician, in violation of La. Admin. C. 46:1505A and 1517D(1).

The record shows that on August 10, 1996, Respondent was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Science in Physician Assistant by the LSU School of Applied Health Professions. She was granted a temporary license to practice as a Physicians Assistant, under the supervision of Dr. Michael Brownlee on December 5, 1996. Apparently she was unable to pass the NCCPA examination, but was issued a second temporary permit dated December 5, 1997, and expiring on December 4, 1998, under the supervision of Dr. Larry Daniels.

She did not pass the NCCPA examination until her fourth try in 1999. However, she did not renew her temporary license, nor did she apply for permanent licensure, until 2002. Nevertheless, she continued to practice under the supervision of Dr. Daniels during that time. By application dated December 19, 2002, Respondent applied for licensure as a Physicians Assistant, and her application was approved on May 20, 2003.

Ms. Norris immediately applied to have Dr. Daniels as her supervisor, and he continued to serve as such until September 24, 2004, when he advised Respondent that would no longer serve as her supervising physician.

The record further reveals that in May, 2003, Ms. Norris applied to have Dr. Chidiadi Dike as her supervising physician, and this application was approved on June 17, 2003. On January 28, 2005, Dr. Dike advised the Board that he would no longer serve as supervising physician for Respondent, because he had learned that some prescriptions in his name had allegedly been forged by her.

On March 23, 2005, the application of Dr. Marius McFarland to supervise Ms. Norris was approved. He terminated his supervision of Respondent on April 14, 2005. Dr. James Floyd, D. O., applied to supervise Ms. Norris in May, 2005, but his application was never completed, and the application withdrawn on June 29, 2005.

On August 29, 2005, Ms. Norris's application to practice under the supervision of Dr. Andrea Blake-McMahon was approved. Dr. Blake-McMahon testified that she had agreed only to review pediatric charts, and that she withdrew her supervision on March 31, 2006, because Respondent was writing prescriptions in her name without proper authorization or discussion. Ms. Norris has had no supervisory physician since that time.

The above evidence reveals that Ms. Norris practiced without a license from December 5, 1998 until May 19, 2003. She practiced without a supervising physician from January 29, 2005 until March 22, 2005; from April 15, 2005 until August 14, 2005; and she has had no supervisor since Dr. Blake-McMahon resigned on March 31, 2006. Respondent testified that she thought she was licensed until she applied to have Dr. Dike as her supervisor, when she learned that she was not. However, there is no record of her ever having applied for licensure until her application of December, 2002.

Respondent admits that she wrote numerous prescriptions in the names of her various supervisory physicians without proper consultation or authorization. Two pharmacies stopped filling prescriptions from the clinics where Respondent worked because they suspected

something was wrong about the prescriptions, and were unable to have them confirmed by the physicians.

Dr. Daniels, Dr. Dike, and Dr. Blake-McMahon all testified that Respondent wrote unauthorized prescriptions. Ms. Norris admitted that she wrote prescriptions without proper authorization, and that she knew it was wrong to do so.

Ms. Norris further testified that she acted improperly because she was afraid she would lose her job if she did not, and that she could not afford to lose the job. She also testified that the prescriptions she wrote were consistent with the treatment given the various patients by the physicians.

Under the above circumstances, we find that she is guilty of all of the charges against her, with the exception of charge No. 8, holding herself out to be a physician. We do not find that there is sufficient evidence to support a finding of guilty on this charge.

While we sympathize with Respondent, we cannot overlook her egregious disregard of the law and the rules of this Board relative to Physicians Assistant practice, particularly in view of her admission that she was aware that what she was doing was illegal. We therefore impose the following sanctions:

1. The license of Letatia Norris, PA-C, to practice as a Physicians Assistant in the State of Louisiana, as evidenced by Certificate No.A10561, is hereby **REVOKED and CANCELLED**, effective **immediately**, but said revocation is hereby stayed, and said license

SUSPENDED FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS, effective immediately, subject to the following terms and conditions:

2. At the conclusion of the above period of suspension, Respondent's license may be reinstated by the Board, but on probation for an additional period of five years, subject to the general conditions of probation heretofore adopted by the Board, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A, and further subject to the following special conditions:

3. She shall never have prescriptive authority.

4. Before she can resume practice, she shall make a personal appearance before the Board, and shall present a letter from a physician, satisfactory to the Board, expressing his willingness to serve as her supervisory physician; or from a physician who already has at least three years experience as a supervisory physician of a Physicians Assistant. Such supervisory physician shall make quarterly reports to the Board as to Respondent's performance of her duties for the first year of her probation, and annual reports thereafter so long as her probation continues.

5. Respondent shall obtain at least 50 hours of continuing education, satisfactory to the Board, for each year her license is suspended or on probation. At the end of each year, Respondent shall submit to the Probation Officer written certification of the continuing education credits earned by her during the preceding twelve months.

6. Respondent shall pay, before the expiration of her probation, a fine of \$500.00, and

all costs of this proceeding.

7. Any violation or failure of the probationer to abide by each of the general terms and special conditions of probation shall be considered a violation of probation and shall constitute sufficient cause for the revocation, suspension or further disciplinary action against the license of probationer, including but not limited to the immediate imposition of any sanctions which may have been stayed, in whole or in part, upon the license of probationer, as if such cause were enumerated in La. Rev. Stat. §37:1285.

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA THIS 2nd DAY OF October, 2006.

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS


BY: KIM EDWARD LeBLANC, M.D., Ph.D., PRESIDENT

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

“EXHIBIT A”

The following general conditions are imposed on all persons placed on supervised probation by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners:

- 1) The probationer is required to report, in person to his probation officer, within 48 hours of receipt of notification that the opinion of the Board is final and executory.
- 2) The probationer is required immediately to complete all forms, fully and carefully, when received, and to present these to his probation officer at the first meeting.
- 3) The probationer is required to report to his probation officer, in person, at such times as may be directed.
- 4) The probationer is required immediately to report to his probation officer any changes in his home address, practice address, practice location, practice affiliation, and any changes in home numbers, including Fax lines, and home and business phones.
- 5) The probationer is required to allow such access to his home or office, as well as all medical and/or psychiatric records, and substance abuse records, as may be necessary to his supervision.
- 6) Upon request of the Board's probation officer, the probationer shall immediately execute and provide, as may be necessary, such authorization and/or medical releases as may be requested to obtain photocopies of medical treatment records of probationer, including but not limited to substance abuse, alcohol, psychiatric or other records which may otherwise be protected by any state or federal law.
- 7) Upon request of the Board's probation officer, the probationer shall immediately execute and provide, as may be necessary, authorization to obtain any and all peer review records pertaining to probationer of any hospital, institution or other health care entity where probationer has had or has privileges.
- 8) Probationer shall submit to alcohol or drug screens through a urine, blood or hair specimen, at the request of the probation officer without prior notice, to

determine chemically through laboratory analysis that probationer is free or prohibited drugs and/or alcohol. Probationer shall pay for the costs of such chemical analysis.

- 9) The probationer is required fully to conform to accepted standards of professional conduct, and with all civil and criminal laws, rules and regulations.
- 10) The probationer is required to submit to such medical or psychiatric examinations, or both, as may be directed by the Board.
- 11) The probationer is required immediately to report to his probation officer any and all investigations, inquiries, charges, convictions, or disciplinary actions taken by any local, state, or Federal agency, or any institution or facility.
- 12) The probationer is required to fulfill all special conditions of probation.
- 13) In addition to such other terms and conditions as are placed upon his license to practice medicine by this Order, the probationer hereby consents to, agrees with and acquiesces in the imposition of any additional terms, conditions or restrictions, as well as the length or nature thereof, including, but not limited to, additional treatment, reports and evaluations and extensions of his suspension and probationary periods, which the Board in its sole discretion may deem necessary or appropriate to impose thereon
- 14) By his subscription hereto, the probationer acknowledges that his receipt of written notification from the Board that is has received apparently reliable information which indicates his failure to abide by the terms and conditions of this Order, shall, without need for formal hearing or providing him with any right to which he may be entitled pursuant to the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act, La. Rev. Stat. §§49:951, et seq., or which otherwise may be afforded to him by law, constitute his consent to the immediate suspension of his license to practice medicine in this state pending the issuance of a decision by the Board following administrative adjudication of such charges.
- 15) The probationer shall immediately notify the Board's Probation and Compliance Officer of any change in his current home and professional addresses and telephone numbers, and he shall direct all matters required pursuant to this Order to the attention of the Probation and Compliance Officer, with whom he shall cooperate on all matters and inquiries pertaining to his compliance with the terms, conditions and restrictions of this Order.

- 16) Should the probationer at any time during the period of probation ordered herein be absent from the state of Louisiana, relocate to and/or take up residency in another state or country for a period of thirty (30) days or more, he will so advise the Board in writing. In such instance, the probationary period ordered herein and all terms and conditions thereof shall be deemed interrupted and extended and shall not commence to run until the probationer notifies the Board in writing that he has returned to, relocated in and/or taken up residency in the state of Louisiana. In such instance, the probationer shall not receive credit toward completion of the probationary period for the time during which he was absent from the State of Louisiana.
- 17) At least sixty (60) days prior to the conclusion of the probationary term imposed herein, the probationer shall provide the Board with an executed affidavit certifying that he has complied with each of the terms of probation imposed upon him by this Order, and he shall contact the Board and arrange for a personal appearance before the Board, or such other committee as may be designated by the Board, at its meeting preceding the expiration of the probationary term ordered herein.
- 18) For each year of the probationary term the probationer shall pay the Board a probation monitoring fee of Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars. Payment of the initial fee shall be done not later than sixty (60) days from the effective date of this Order. All subsequent annual payments shall be due on or before the anniversary date of the initial fee payment.