

# LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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## IN THE MATTER OF: THOMAS DARREN CARPENTER

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## APPLICATION FOR LICENSURE AS A RESPIRATORY THERAPY TECHNICIAN

By application dated April 23, 1996, Thomas Darren Carpenter seeks licensure as a Respiratory Therapy Technician. On the application, he indicated that he had been "addicted to or used in excess any drug or chemical substance, including alcohol". He also disclosed several traffic offense convictions, including driving while intoxicated and careless or reckless operation of a motor vehicle.

The hearing was conducted before a quorum of the Board consisting of Drs. Keith C. Ferdinand, President; Mary Lou Applewhite, Vice-President; Trenton L. James II, Secretary-Treasurer; F. P. Bordelon, Member; Ike Muslow, Member; and Richard M. Nunnally, Member. Mr. Carpenter was present, unrepresented by counsel. At the direction of Dr. Ferdinand, the hearing was conducted by Frederick S. Ellis, the Board's independent counsel.

The Board requested a report from Mr. Carpenter's psychiatrist as to his present condition and received a letter from Nancy Jean Johnson, M.D., of the Willis-Knighton Addiction Recovery Center, which reported as follows:

"He first began to drink in his late teens, He also had a period of illicit drug use to include IV crystal methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana. He has not used any illicit drugs for the past five years.

He went to treatment in 1990 after a suicide attempt. He stayed for a period of time in psychiatric unit of Willis-Knighton then completed an out-patient program at Riverside.

Since that time he has worked at General Motors while going to respiratory therapy school. He has an excellent work record.

After his treatment in 1990 his drinking has been occasional and sporadic.

(Carpenter, September 1996)

He drinks about twice each year. He obtained a careless and reckless after his last episode in September of 1995 and has not had any alcohol or drugs since that time.

He has a stable marriage of seven years and two children he supports. At present he is attending Bossier Parish Community College to obtain an associate degree in respiratory therapy.

Imp: Alcohol Dependence -  
In remission

Pec: I see no problem at this time which would prevent him from obtaining his license. I suggested to him that he become more actively involved in a continuing recovery program."

Based on the above information, the Licensure Committee recommended that the Board deny Mr. Carpenter's application. He was so advised, and notified of his right to appear before the Board for a full hearing on his application. He requested the hearing, which was held on August 22, 1996.

### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

At the hearing, documents in full support of the facts above set forth were offered in evidence, and Mr. Carpenter, unrepresented by counsel, was given the opportunity to speak in support of his application.

He admitted his past history of drug and alcohol abuse, as well as a suicide attempt in 1990. After his conviction for driving while intoxicated in 1988, he received outpatient treatment at Willis Knighton, and attended Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for 18 months. He stated that he stopped going to the AA meetings because he was feeling good and had no desire to drink, and felt no need for AA. Despite about two relapses per year since that time, he did not start attending meetings again until he ran into this problem with licensure. He has recently attended two meetings per week, and testified that he intends to attend three meetings per week in the future.

Mr. Carpenter further testified that he feels good, has no desire to drink alcohol or use drugs, and believes that he is recovered. He has not used alcohol, he says, since his May 1995, arrest for driving while intoxicated.

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Carpenter is still in denial of his alcoholism, despite his feelings to the contrary, and that he is in need of further evaluation and treatment.

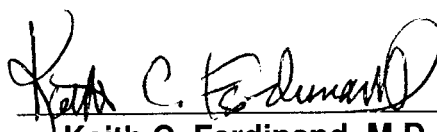
**DECISION**

Accordingly, it is the decision of the Board that the application of Thomas Darren Carpenter for licensure as a Respiratory Therapy Technician be granted, but that the said license be immediately placed on probation for a period of five years, subject to the general terms and conditions of probation heretofore adopted by the Board, and subject to the following special conditions:

- 1) Mr. Carpenter shall be evaluated by a substance abuse counselor satisfactory to the Board, who shall report his findings and recommendations to the Board within 30 days. Upon receipt of the report, the Board may make further provisions for the treatment of respondent.
- 2) Respondent's employer shall be notified of his condition, and his employer and supervising physician shall submit quarterly reports on his performance and sobriety.
- 3) Respondent shall attend at least three Alcoholics Anonymous meeting per week during the period of his probation, and shall have a sponsor in that organization.
- 4) Upon request of the Board's probation officer, the respondent shall immediately execute and provide, as may be necessary, such authorization and/or medical release as may be requested to obtain photocopies of medical treatment records of respondent, including, but not limited to substance abuse, alcohol abuse, psychiatric or other records which may otherwise be protected by any state or federal law.
- 5) Respondent 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 respondent is free of prohibited drugs and/or alcohol. Respondent shall pay for the costs of such chemical analyses.

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1996.

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD  
OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

  
Keith C. Ferdinand, M.D.  
President