



LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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**BEFORE THE
LOUISIANA STATE BOARD
OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

No. 2023-I-18

IN THE MATTER OF:

CHELSEA ERIN CULPEPPER, LRT
(License No. LRT.001038)

**CONSENT ORDER
FOR REPRIMAND**

The above-captioned matter was docketed for investigation by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners (the "Board") following the receipt of apparently reliable information indicating that Chelsea Erin Culpepper, LRT ("Ms. Culpepper"), a respiratory therapist who at all times pertinent has been licensed and engaged in the practice of respiratory therapy in and around Monroe, Louisiana, had failed to fully comply with the terms of her Allied Professionals Health Program ("APHP") monitoring agreement.

Investigation of the captioned matter was assigned to Lawrence H. Cresswell, III, D.O., J.D., Director of Investigations (the "Investigating Officer") for the Board. The investigation revealed that Ms. Culpepper entered into a monitoring agreement with the APHP on or around July 29, 2022, to address issues regarding an arrest for driving while intoxicated. In her APHP monitoring agreement, Ms. Culpepper agreed to "maintain complete and total abstinence from the use of any alcohol or mood-altering substances except as may be prescribed for a *bona fide* medical condition by a treating physician," and further agreed to undergo at least eighteen (18) random screens for drugs and/or alcohol over the course of one (1) year. Ms. Culpepper also agreed that failure to fulfill any part of the agreement could result in disciplinary action by the Board.

During the course of the investigation, the Investigating Officer confirmed that Ms. Culpepper had an extended period of failing to comply with the APHP's testing program, particularly with regard to missed call-ins and failures to appear for urine drug screening. At the request of the Board, Ms. Culpepper underwent an evaluation at a Board-approved facility on June 7, 2023. Her evaluator recommended that Ms. Culpepper would be able to practice respiratory therapy with skill and safety only after completing a Board-approved inpatient treatment program and executing a monitoring contract with the Board. Ms. Culpepper completed a program at a Board-approved facility on August 25, 2023. Her evaluator reported that Ms. Culpepper "showed improved insight and motivation" in her treatment and "expressed appreciation for monitoring and the accountability it provides." Her treating provider recommended that Ms. Culpepper is safe to practice respiratory therapy after executing a three-year APHP monitoring agreement and further recommended that Ms. Culpepper follow a continuing care plan. Ms. Culpepper executed a three-year APHP monitoring agreement on August 31, 2023.

As evidenced by her subscription hereto, Ms. Culpepper acknowledges the substantial accuracy of the foregoing information and that such information would provide the Investigating Officer assigned to this matter by the Board with sufficient cause to institute administrative proceedings against her respiratory therapy licensure for violations of the Louisiana Respiratory Therapy Practice Act, La. R.S. 37:3358(A)(7) and (15),¹ pursuant to Administrative Complaint, and that proof of such information upon administrative evidentiary hearing may establish grounds under the Act for such action against her license to practice respiratory therapy in the state of Louisiana as the Board might deem appropriate.

Recognizing her right to have notice and administrative adjudication of any charges that may be asserted against her in these proceedings, at which time Ms. Culpepper would be entitled to be represented by legal counsel, to call witnesses and to present evidence on her own behalf in defense or in mitigation of the charges made and to a decision thereon by the Board based upon written findings of fact and conclusions of law pursuant to 49:950 *et seq.*, Ms. Culpepper, nonetheless, hereby waives her right to notice and formal adjudication and, pursuant to La. R.S. 49:975(D), consents to entry of the Order set forth hereinafter. Ms. Culpepper acknowledges that she hereby waives any right to which she may be entitled pursuant to the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act, La. R.S. 49:950 *et seq.*, or which may be afforded to her by any other law to contest or appeal her agreement to or the force and effect of the Board's investigation or this Order in any court or other forum. By her subscription hereto, Ms. Culpepper also hereby authorizes the Investigating Officer designated by the Board with respect hereto to present this Order to the Board for its consideration and to fully disclose to and discuss with the Board the nature and results of the investigation and she waives any objection to such disclosures under La. R.S. 49:977.2. Ms. Culpepper expressly acknowledges that the disclosure of such information to the Board by the Investigating Officer shall be without prejudice to the Investigating Officer's authority to proceed with the adjudication of an administrative complaint against her or to the Board's capacity to adjudicate such complaint should the Board decline to approve this Order.

Based upon the information provided, and upon the recommendation of the Investigating Officer, the Board hereby concludes that, consistent with its mandate under La. R.S. 37:1261, the interests of public health, safety, and welfare will be effectively served by entry of the Order set forth hereinafter by consent. The Board has considered the guidelines for minimum and maximum disciplinary dispositions and the aggravating and mitigating circumstances apparent from the particular facts and circumstances of this matter.² Accordingly, in consideration of the foregoing and pursuant to the authority vested in the Board by La. R.S. 37:3358 and La. R.S. 49:975(D);

¹ The Board may take action against a licensee for violations of La. R.S. 37:3358(A)(7) ("Habitual or recurring abuse of drugs, including alcohol, which affect the central nervous system and which are capable of inducing physiological or psychological dependence") and (15) ("Inability to practice respiratory therapy with reasonable competence, skill, or safety to patients because of mental or physical illness, condition, or deficiency, including but not limited to deterioration through the aging process of excessive use or abuse of drugs, including alcohol").

² See La. Admin. Code tit. 46, pt. XLV, §§ 9714; 9716.

IT IS ORDERED that the license of Chelsea Erin Culpepper, LRT, to engage in the practice of respiratory therapy be and the same is hereby **OFFICIALLY REPRIMANDED** for the conduct described above.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Ms. Culpepper shall, within one hundred and twenty (120) days of the date of this Order, pay to the Board a fine in the amount of Two Hundred and No/100 Dollars (\$200.00).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, within six (6) months of the effective date of this Order, Ms. Culpepper shall complete the free online course "Laws and Rules for Respiratory Therapy in Louisiana," which may be accessed through the following link, <https://www.lsbme.la.gov/content/board-orientations-online-courses>. Upon completion of the course, Ms. Culpepper shall complete the verification process and obtain a certificate of completion that will be submitted to the Board or its designee by the course provider.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Ms. Culpepper shall continue to maintain a monitoring agreement with the APHP for a period of no less than three (3) years. Ms. Culpepper agrees that the APHP shall report any violation of her agreement to the Board or its designee. The Board may take disciplinary action against Ms. Culpepper based on any future violation of her APHP agreement, as if such violation was enumerated among the causes provided in La. R.S. 37:1285.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that any violation of or failure of strict compliance with any of the terms set forth by this Order by Ms. Culpepper shall be deemed adequate and sufficient cause, upon proof of such violation or failure, for such other action against Ms. Culpepper's license to practice respiratory therapy in the State of Louisiana as the Board may deem appropriate as if such violations were enumerated among the causes provided in La. R.S. 37:3358.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Consent Order shall be effective as of the date it is approved and accepted by the Board as shown by the signature of the Board's representative below.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Consent Order shall be, and shall be deemed to be, a public record.

New Orleans, Louisiana, this 11th day of December, 2023.

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD
OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS



By: _____
TERRIE R. THOMAS, M.D.
President

Acknowledgment and Consent on Following Page

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT
AND CONSENT**

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PARISH OF Union

I, CHELSEA ERIN CULPEPPER, LRT, hereby acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to seek the advice and guidance of legal counsel with respect to this Consent Order and that all of its terms and conditions have been fully explained to me and/or that I fully understand them. I further acknowledge that I approve, accept, and consent to entry of the above and foregoing Order without duress and of my own free will and accord, this 11th day of October, 2023.

Chelsea Erin Culpepper LRT
CHELSEA ERIN CULPEPPER, LRT

WITNESSES:

Ashley Matthews
Signature

Linda L Spillers
Signature

Ashley Matthews
Typed Name

Linda L. Spillers
Typed Name

524 Ford Rd
Street Address

103 Margie Dr.
Street Address

Monroe LA 71260
City/State/Zip Code

West Monroe, LA 71291
City/State/Zip Code

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 11th day of Oct, 2023, in the presence of the two stated witnesses.

Melba M Phelps
Notary Public (Signature)

Name: Melba M. Phelps
Notary/Bar No.: _____
Commission expires: _____

Melba M. Phelps, Notary Public
In and for Union Parish, Louisiana
Commission Expires at Death
Notary ID #067377