

**BEFORE THE REVIEW COMMITTEE
OF THE AMERICAN MIDWIFERY CERTIFICATION BOARD**

In the Disciplinary Matter of:

Ronalynn Cynthia Wenzel

Respondent

DECISION

On 7/6/2012, the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) was notified of a May 10, 2010 Default Decision and Order from the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) in which the license of Ronalynn Cynthia Wenzel to practice registered nursing and nurse-midwifery was revoked. The revocation of Respondent's license represented possible violations by Respondent of AMCB's Discipline Policy. Action on Respondent's California license was based upon findings that, while working as a Registered Nurse, she had forged multiple prescriptions for controlled substances for her own use. In accordance with AMCB procedures, the matter was reviewed by a Disciplinary Review Committee comprised of three individuals with no prior involvement with the matter. After review it was determined that the complaint considered by the California Board of Registered Nursing presented sufficient evidence to warrant disciplinary action by the AMCB.

Respondent's RN and nurse-midwifery licenses expired on September 30, 2009, six (6) days following the filing of the complaint by the BRN. These licenses were not renewed. The Respondent, in the course of the California BRN investigation, admitted to multiple episodes of forged prescriptions for controlled substances, but failed to file notice of defense and did not appear at the scheduled hearing. Therefore, on May 10, 2010, Respondent's licenses were formally revoked. Respondent had seven (7) days in which to file a motion requesting that the BRN decision be vacated but no request was filed.

At the time of Respondent's initial certification, recertification was not required. As a result of a change in this policy, in February, 2011, AMCB attempted to notify Respondent of the requirement for recertification and participation in the Certificate Maintenance Program. That letter, mailed to 1029 E Carson Street, Apartment 3, Long Beach, CA 90807, was returned marked "bad address."

On July 31, 2012, AMCB attempted to notify Respondent that it had initiated a disciplinary proceeding to determine whether good cause existed for imposing discipline under the following provisions of the Disciplinary Policy:

A.7: Limitation or sanction by a federal, state or private licensing board, administrative agency, association or health care organization relating to public health or safety, or midwifery practice and/or;

A.9: Engaging in conduct which is inconsistent with professional standards, including but not limited to (i) any practice that creates unnecessary danger to a patient's life, health or safety; and (ii) any practice that is contrary to the ethical conduct appropriate to the profession that results in termination or suspension from practice. Actual injury to a patient or the public need not be shown under this provision.

AMCB requested that Respondent submit a written response to the charge within thirty days of receipt of the letter-notice. A People Search had been conducted to identify any new address and the initial notification attempt was mailed Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested, to 17952 River Circle #2, Canyon Country, CA 91387. This letter was returned "unclaimed, unable to forward." A final attempt at notification was sent by Fed Ex on 10/16/2012. This letter was delivered on 10/19/2012, but not signature was obtained. AMCB has received no response from the Respondent in spite of repeated attempts to communicate.

The Review Committee has now considered the charges against Respondent and the above-described matters of record. On the basis of the factual findings and reasons set forth below, the Committee unanimously concludes that grounds for discipline against Respondent exist under sections A.7. and A.9 of the Discipline Policy.

FINDINGS

The Review Committee finds the following facts:

1. AMCB (previously known as ACC) was formed in 1991 by the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) as an independent entity to carry on the existing program of ACNM for certifying the competency of individuals as entry-level nurse midwives.
2. AMCB assumed responsibility for discipline of ACNM/AMCB certificants through the Discipline Policy, the most recent version of which AMCB adopted in December 2003.
3. Respondent was certified by the ACNM in 1983.
4. The California Board of Registered Nursing cited Respondent for acts or omissions that violated professional standards nurse-midwives, including:
 - a. Forging a prescription for Vicodin under another practitioner's name in 2004.
 - b. Altering a prescription for Vicodin to obtain the "extra strength" form in 2005.
 - c. Presenting over 22 fraudulent prescriptions for Vicodin, Acyclovir, Macrobid and Ambien for her personal use to 3 different pharmacies between 2004-2005.
 - d. Personal use of controlled substances while employed to an extent that a threat to public safety existed.
5. Respondent's license to practice in the state of California was revoked on May 10, 2010.

6. Respondent's AMCB certification expired on 12/31/12. Respondent was notified of her lapse in certification by Registered Mail on 12/31/12. AMCB received no response, and no effort has been made to renew Respondent's certificate.
7. AMCB has found no evidence of current practice as a nurse-midwife by Respondent.

DISCUSSION

In this matter we are called upon to decide whether and what discipline is warranted against a CNM whose license to practice nursing and nurse-midwifery has been revoked for behavior that breaches professional standards for nurse-midwives.

The Committee is persuaded that there is evidence that Respondent's behavior breaches professional standards by:

1. Submission of fraudulent prescriptions for controlled substances
2. Personal use of excessive amounts of controlled substances

SANCTIONS FOR VIOLATIONS

The Review Committee agrees with the sanction imposed by the California Board of Registered Nursing. Given the egregious breach of professional behavior acknowledged by the Respondent and no evidence of attempt to rehabilitate her professional status, the Committee recommends permanent revocation of her certification as a nurse-midwife.

Effective: October, 2013

REVIEW COMMITTEE

Carol Howe, CNM, DNSc, FACNM, Chair
Leslie Cragin, CNM, PhD, FACNM
Monica Vieira, CNM,

Cara Krulewitch, CNM
AMCB President, Board of Directors