

NURSE IMPOSTER ALERT

MAY 2003-APRIL 2004

The following individuals have either applied for a nursing position or have been employed as a nurse in Arizona without evidence of a valid nursing license.

Darnell Williams, LPN Imposter. Issued a Cease and Desist letter April 9, 2004. In July 2003 Williams applied for LPN employment with an Arizona nursing registry. He presented a Delaware license with an expiration date of 2006. (According to Delaware, this license expired February 28, 2004.) Although Delaware is a compact state, Williams does not hold a multistate license, as he is not a resident of Delaware. Williams was not hired following a background and licensure check. During the recent investigation of another case, Board staff identified that Williams may be working as a nurse in Arizona with a different nursing registry. Records obtained reflect that in October 2003, Williams accepted LPN employment and without having applied for licensure in Arizona. He again presented a Delaware license with an expiration date in 2006.

Colette Bigler, RN Imposter. Issued a Cease and Desist letter April 9, 2004. Bigler provided an altered license belonging to another RN and had been working as a RN in surgical areas since at least 2001. Bigler's employer discovered that the license number that she provided them and had been working under since the time of hire was actually issued to another individual after attempting to verify the license through the Board's online verification. Bigler reportedly has prior experience as a respiratory therapist and may have gained access to another's license through a prior work setting.

Melissa Addison, LPN Imposter. Issued a Cease and Desist letter March 17, 2004. Addison was employed at least 3 months as an LPN after applying for a position, claiming to have graduated from an LPN program and producing a photocopy of a LPN license that had been altered with her name. Following repeated requests for Addison to show her employer her original license, the employer performed an online verification and identified that Addison has an expired CNA certificate and is not a LPN. Addison reportedly gained access to the LPN license through a personal relationship with the actual nurse. In addition to presenting fraudulent credentials, Addison's inability to perform at a level consistent with acceptable LPN practice raised suspicion at her place of employment.

Lisa Biggs, Revoked LPN. Continued to work following the revocation of her LP license. Issued Cease and Desist letter March 4, 2004. Biggs accepted position at a physician's office where she had been previously employed. Her employer reportedly was alerted when a probation officer called for Biggs and then contacted ASBN to confirm her licensure status. After being released from this employment, Biggs obtained employment in another physician's office. Upon seeing her name in the newsletter, her employer called ASBN to confirm Biggs's license status (revoked).

Marie Grimaldo-Pallister, RN Imposter. Issued and Cease and Desist letter December

24, 2003. No known prior nursing related experience but worked in some capacity in a healthcare setting, possibly in housekeeping. Applied for an RN position and submitted a document reflecting that the Arizona Medical Board had issued her a nursing license and submitted several other fraudulent certificates related to education (MSW) and certification by another regulatory board. Reportedly obtained the documents from her work setting and altered the documents by replacing the name of the individual with her name and then copying the documents and providing the altered photocopied documents to at least two different nursing employers.

Vicki Bowen, Revoked LPN. Issued a Cease and Desist letter December 23, 2003. Bowen continued to work in a position requiring LPN licensure after her license was revoked in July 2003. Bowen worked until Nov 2003 when her employer received the newsletter and learned that her license had been revoked.

Maribel Gonzalez, LP Imposter, Expired CNA certificate. Issued a Cease and Desist letter December 4, 2003. Gonzalez worked as LP from 2001-2003 and possibly even as early as 2000 by obtaining and altering a family member's license number. She worked for at least one registry and two long-term care facilities. She had been terminated from her prior job after submitting a fraudulent CPR card (altered dates of expiration) and demonstrating difficulties performing the duties of an LPN. Gonzalez was identified during an employment application process while seeking another LPN position when the name on the copied license she provided to the prospective employer did not match the name as issued by ASBN. Additionally, information Gonzalez provided on her resume and application was not consistent.

Amber Kopf, Nurse Imposter. Issued a Cease and Desist letter May 20, 2003. Kopf was issued a Cease and Desist letter after a caller reported that Kopf, a Medical Assistant in a physician's office, repeatedly identified herself to patients and callers as the triage "nurse" and office "nurse" despite being told that she can not use the title "nurse". Calls to her employment phone number confirmed that she identified herself as a "nurse".

In addition to the above, the Board issued Cease and Desist letters to 3 individuals who were working in a position requiring nursing licensure after having failed the licensure exam and thus not currently eligible for licensure. The Board also has issued Cease and Desist letters to 11 individuals working as a "CNA" without valid certification. For questions regarding imposters or to report an imposter, please contact Valerie Smith, RN, MS, Associate Director at vsmith@azbn.org (602-889-5206) or Thereasa Berry, Assistant to Associate Director/Investigations at tberry@azbn.org (602-889-5208)