SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF NURSING

IN THE MATTER OF THE LICENSURE PROCEEDINGS

RE: ELIZABETH ANN STEARNS, LPN

License No. P010417,
Licensee.

ORDER OF REINSTATEMENT WITH PROBATION

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Ann Stearns, LPN, ("Licensee"), is licensed to practice as a practical nurse in the State of South Dakota and holds license number P010417; and

WHEREAS, on February 22, 2012, the South Dakota Board of Nursing ("Board") accepted a Voluntary Surrender Consent Order signed by the Licensee on February 10, 2012, arising out of her admission that while employed as a practical nurse in a medical clinic, she fraudulently had prescriptions of hydrocodone filled on multiple occasions for her own use; and

WHEREAS, the Voluntary Surrender Consent Order suspended the Licensee’s LPN license for an indefinite period subject to a reinstatement request pursuant to SDCL § 36-9-59, as the Board in its discretion may determine; and

WHEREAS, the Licensee made a reinstatement request in writing dated June 14, 2013, and personally appeared before the Board on July 18, 2013, at which time the matter of Licensee’s reinstatement was presented to the Board. The Licensee presented
documentation supporting her reinstatement, including a reference and employment verification from her current office manager at Addiction Family Resources. The Board was also provided with an evaluation report from the Health Professionals Assistance Program ("HPAP") dated July 15, 2013. Susan Harris of HPAP provided testimony and answered questions in regard to the HPAP report and recommendations. Licensee also provided testimony and answered questions of the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board has considered the Licensee’s request, the statement and documents provided by the Licensee, the previous Orders, the HPAP report, as well Licensee’s own testimony, and, being fully advised in the premises;

NOW THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. That the Board has jurisdiction over the person of the Licensee and the subject matter of this Order.

2. That the Licensee’s license to practice as a practical nurse in the State of South Dakota is hereby reinstated and placed on probationary status for a period of sixty (60) months of active practice as a practical nurse.

3. The Board hereby mandates Licensee’s continued participation in the Health Professionals Assistance Program for a period of five (5) years with credit given for time of previous successful participation in the program.
4. All probationary terms and conditions as well as clearance to return to employment and any restrictions on access to narcotics shall be set by the HPAP, and the Licensee shall fully comply with all of those terms and conditions.

5. After verification from HPAP that the Licensee has completed all monitoring terms, the Licensee may petition the Board for a closure of this probation. The Licensee is not entitled to early closure of probation. The duration of the terms of probation as set by HPAP shall be no less than the initial terms of sixty (60) months with credit being given for time already served in HPAP. It is recognized that the Board may require additional probationary time or additional terms upon completion of HPAP. Additionally, Licensee shall comply with the following conditions during her probation:

**CONDITIONS**

1. Licensee shall at any time during the period of probation report in person to such meetings of the Board or to its designated representative as directed and otherwise fully cooperate with the Board and its representatives in terms of this probation.

2. The Licensee shall notify the Board, as well as HPAP, in writing, within one (1) week of any change in nursing employment, personal address, and/or telephone number.

3. Licensee shall pay for all costs and expenses in carrying out conditions of probation.

4. That within ten (10) days of the effective date of this order, Licensee shall be issued her LPN license by the Board office and it is to be stamped "PROBATION".
5. If the Licensee violates and terms of this probation, the Licensee agrees that the Board may take such action against Licensee's license as the Board deems necessary, up to and including an immediate suspension, additional probationary terms, revocation, or other disciplinary action.

6. Licensee shall not violate any law or regulation regarding the practice of nursing.

7. The Licensee shall not practice nursing in any State other than South Dakota which is a party state to the Nurse Licensure Compact without prior written authorization from both the Board and the Nursing Regulatory Authority in the party state in which the Licensee desires to practice.

8. This probation also effects Licensee's practice privilege to practice in South Dakota should Licensee change her home state under the Nurse Licensure Compact, and Licensee's practice privilege is subject to the same requirements set forth in this order as her South Dakota license.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the above Reinstatement Order with Probation was adopted by the South Dakota Board of Nursing on the 18th day of July, 2013 by a vote of 10 - 0, one abstention.

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF NURSING

[Signature]
Gloria Damgaard, RN, MS
Executive Director