

Covenant School of Nursing  
Disciplinary Action Summary Assignment  
Instructional Module 2

Student Name: Drew Raagas      Date: 01/23/2025      DAS Assignment # 1

Name of the defendant: Courtne Heather Lopez, RN      License number of the defendant: 787733

Date action was taken against the license: May 12, 2020

Type of action taken against the license: Revoked

- *Use the space below to describe the events which led to the action(s) taken against the license. If multiple charges were in play, be sure and cite them, e.g. drug diversion, HIPAA violation, abandonment, forfeiture on student loans, etc.*

In this event, the nurse involved was clearly unfit to practice due to being intoxicated with alcohol while on duty at College Station Medical Center. As stated, signs of impairment that were showing includes: slurred speech, an unsteady gait, drowsiness, and an odor of alcohol. Upon recognizing these signs, the nurse was clearly under the influence of alcohol. Under these conditions, her ability to be a prudent nurse was clearly compromised, making her a hazard to everyone around her, specifically to the patients under her care.

- *Use the space below to provide a description of measures you think could have prevented any action being taken against the license and/or would have prevented harm to the patient, if harm occurred.*

I personally think that any medical working environment should promote a culture where all employees feel responsible for their actions and are encouraged to report any signs of impairment in themselves or their colleagues to help prevent any incidents. Establishing and enforcing strict policies regarding substance use in the workplace can deter nurses from practicing under the influence. This includes random drug and alcohol testing.

- *Identify ALL universal competencies were violated and explain how.*

**Professional Role:** Practicing under the influence of alcohol violates the professional role of a nurse in several ways. Nurses are expected to maintain a high standard of professional behavior, which includes being sober and fully capable of performing their duties. Being under the influence of alcohol while on duty compromises this standard and can lead to

disciplinary actions or license revocation. This impairment affects the nurse's ability to provide safe and effective care and uphold the trust that the patients and colleagues placed in them.

**Safety and Security; Critical Thinking:** Ensuring patient safety is a fundamental competency. Impaired behavior due to alcohol can endanger patients by affecting the nurse's ability to make sound decisions and notice any subtle changes in patients' conditions. This impairment put patients at risk by potentially causing medical errors that can lead to an injury or even death to a patient.

**Communication:** Practicing nursing under the influence of alcohol can significantly impair a nurse's communication abilities. In this case, the nurse exhibited signs of impairment behavior, such as slurred speech and drowsiness. These symptoms can hinder effective communication with patients, colleagues, and other health care professionals, leading to misunderstandings and errors in patient care. Clear and accurate communication is essential for ensuring patient safety and high-quality care. When a nurse is under the influence of alcohol, their ability to convey important information, respond to patient needs, and collaborate with the healthcare team is compromised, potentially putting patients at risk.

**Human Caring:** In the context of human caring, ethical practice is fundamental. Nurses are expected to act in the best interests of their patients, which includes maintaining a high standard of professional behavior. Practicing under the influence of alcohol violates these ethical obligations because it compromises the nurse's ability to provide safe and effective care. This impairment can lead to poor clinical judgement, endangering patients and undermining the trust that is essential in the nurse-patient relationship.

- *Use the space below to describe what action you think a prudent nurse would take as the first to person to discover the event described. In other words, you are the one who discovers the patient has been harmed by the nurse or you have discovered the impairment or criminal activity cited in the disciplinary action.*

My priority would be to ensure the immediate safety and well-being of the patients that the nurse was handling by providing the necessary medical care or calling for additional medical assistance. I would also promptly report the situation to my immediate supervisor or the appropriate authority within the healthcare facility. I would also adhere to and follow the facility's protocols and procedures for handling such incidents and help by giving any information that I can provide.