

Covenant School of Nursing

Disciplinary Action Summary Assignment

Instructional Module 2

Student Name: Jacey Ammons

Date: 4/11/2025

DAS Assignment # 2

Name of the defendant: Melissa Gayle Hartsell, RN

License number of the defendant: 605209

Date(s) and BON decision(s) taken against the license:

October 31, 2022, and received a warning with stipulations and a fine.

Type of action(s) imposed to retain or regain licensure, if applicable (ex.: warning with stipulations, etc.)

Melissa had to pay a \$250.00 fine within 45 days of this order.

- *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 each of them, e.g. drug diversion, HIPAA violation, abandonment, etc.*

Melissa was employed at numerous locations as a Registered Nurse for 28 years before she received her first Disciplinary action. She was employed at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Longview Regional Medical Center, Plano Medical Center, Houston Northwest Medical, Stanford Medical Center, Desert Region Medical Center, Castro Valley, Arlington Memorial Hospital, and Recovery Unplugged. Recovery Unplugged is the center at which her disciplinary actions occurred at. She committed two actions that lead to her license having to be reviewed. Those being depriving a resident of lifesaving interventions and forging another nurse's initials. These decisions had a big effect on others around her and even led to some getting hurt and dying.

In 2022 while Melissa was at work, she told an unlicensed staff member to transport a patient to the facility and then when the patient started overdosing, she did not tell anyone to go get help. Thus, leading to no emergency services or equipment being called for or used. Because of this decision Melissa deprived the patient of lifesaving interventions. In this situation Melissa should have asked for help as soon as she heard/ realized the patient was overdosing. This reckless action led to losing the life of someone that might have been able to be saved if it were not for Melissa.

On February 1st, Melissa then started committing her second disciplinary action. When in the narcotic logs for patients, Melissa would forge another nurse's initials so it would say the other nurse administered the medications and not Melissa. This went on for a little over a month. The nurse whose initials she was forging never gave her permission to use her initials nor had any idea that she was doing this. She neither had any knowledge of the tasks she was apparently completing. This action led to inaccurate documentation and could have led to inaccurate treatment. It also puts the nurse whose signature was forged into a liability issue as well since now their name is tied to something they did not do.

After conducting the investigation Melissa revealed that the reason as to why she forged the nurse's signature was because she observed blanks already in the log and matched it to the nursing schedule of who was supposed to sign it and then placed their initials in the box. While she might have been doing what she thought was for the best, Melissa should have handled the situation differently, so she was not putting herself at risk.

In Terms of Melissa's order, her license now has some restrictions to them. Her warning with stipulations has led to this order applying to any and all future nursing license Melissa may have. Melissa may not practice nursing in the state of Texas unless she is in accordance with this order. Melissa may not work outside the state of Texas. She must comply with all respects of the Nurse Practicing Act. 30 days after this order Melissa must complete the online course "Understanding Board Orders" and then will have to submit verification on completion. If the Board wants her to complete any remedial education course, she must complete it within one year of the effective date of this order. She must complete a board approved course in Texas Nursing Jurisprudence and Ethics, Nursing Documentation, and Sharpening Critical Thinking Skills. Melissa must pay a fine of \$250.00 within 45 days of this order. For Employment, she must work a minimum of 64 hours per month for one year. She must notify present and future employers of this order. Each employer must submit a notification of employment within 5 days of employment. Melissa must be indirectly supervised by a nurse who is on the premises. Lastly, each employer must submit nursing performance evaluation forms to the Board.

- *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 think there are several measures that could have been taken to both protect the patients and nurses around Melissa, and Melissa's license itself. If Melissa had got the patient, the appropriate help when they were overdosing, she may have been able to save that person's life. This also would have been a big step in protecting her license. Since Melissa stated that when she was forging other nurses' signatures, she was only doing it because she was filling in Blanks that were left before her, she should have told the head nurse and the charge nurse. That way she was protecting herself and bringing attention to the problem that needs to be fixed. Instead, what she thought was doing everyone else a favor turned out to be a big wrong that got her in a lot of trouble. This action could have also put the other nurses around her in danger as well since no one would have been able to back up that they did that since it was not documented themselves. If she had taken any of those actions it would have greatly protected her, her license and took the patients out of harms way.

- *Identify ALL universal competencies (4-5) that were violated and explain how in detail to reflect your understanding and importance of the universal competencies.*

There were four universal competencies that were violated in this case. Those being Communication, Documentation, Critical Thinking, and Human Caring.

Communication was violated because when the patient was overdosing nurse Melissa did not communicate to anyone that the patient needed help or for them to seek emergency services leading to the death of a patient that could have been prevented. If she had voiced what was going on to others it would have helped a lot.

Documentation was violated because she was forging other signatures. This can lead to inaccurate medical records. These decisions put everyone else around her at risk and could also have led to knowing one knowing what actually happened since nothing was right on the documentation.

Critical Thinking was violated when she made the decision not to call anyone for help with the overdosing patient. She made what decision she apparently thought was best when it turned out not to be. Asking for help and notifying the people around her would have been the best critical thinking decision to make for both her and the patient.

Human Caring was the last universal competency violated. This one was violated because she did not listen to the patient's needs when he was overdosing. By her choosing to listen to what was going on with the patient and not what she thought was best, this whole case could have been prevented.

- *Use the space below to describe what actions 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.*

If I was the nurse that discovered this event first, I would immediately report to the charge and head nurse, and the board of nursing. Since nurse Melissa was forging signatures, I would have reported instantly to make sure that she was not jeopardizing everyone else's career or my career for her decisions. I also would have reported her if I had heard about what happened with the overdosing patient. She did not take the right steps in trying to save a patient's life which led to the loss of one instead. I would also make sure to explain in detail the severity of these events to make sure that they understand what exactly happened.