



I do hereby certify this to be a complete, accurate and true copy of the document which is on file or is of record in the offices of the Texas Board of Nursing.
Kristin K. Benton, DNP, RN
Kristin K. Benton, DNP, RN
Executive Director
Texas Board of Nursing

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

In the Matter of
MELANIE AMBER LASTER,
Vocational Nurse License Number 343861

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ORDER OF THE BOARD

On this day the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, considered the matter of MELANIE AMBER LASTER, Vocational Nurse License Number 343861, hereinafter referred to as Respondent.

This action was taken in accordance with Section 301.453(c), Texas Occupations Code.

Respondent waived notice and hearing and agreed to the entry of this Order.

The Board makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent's license to practice as a vocational nurse in the State of Texas is in current status.
2. Respondent waived notice and hearing, and agreed to the entry of this Order.
3. Respondent received a Certificate in Vocational Nursing from Temple Junior College, Temple, Texas, on May 1, 2018. Respondent was licensed to practice vocational nursing in the State of Texas on June 28, 2018.
4. Respondent's nursing employment history includes:

6/2018 – 9/2019

LVN

Hillside Medical Lodge
Gatesville, Texas

Respondent's nursing employment history continued:

9/2019 – 7/2020	LVN	UTMB Texas Department of Corrections Lane Murray Unit Gatesville, Texas
8/2020 – 9/2020	Not employed in nursing	
10/2020 – 4/2021	LVN (travel/contract)	Wellpath Nashville, Tennessee
5/2021 – 10/2021	LVN	Amberwood Health and Rehabilitation Benton, Arkansas
11/2021	Unknown	Unknown
12/2021 – 7-2022	LVN	Grifols Plasma Center Little Rock, Arkansas
8/2022 – Present	Unknown	Unknown

5. On or about November 29, 2022, Respondent was required to successfully complete the Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses (TPAPN) through an Order of the Board. A copy of the November 29, 2022, Order is attached and incorporated herein by reference as part of this Order.
6. On or about August 28, 2023, the Board provided notice to Respondent that an investigation was being initiated into alleged violations of the Nursing Practice Act and/or the Board's Rules and Regulations Relating to Nurse Education, Licensure, and Practice, as follows:
 - o On or about August 22, 2023, Respondent became non-compliant with the Agreed Order for Peer Assistance Program issued to her by the Texas Board of Nursing on November 29, 2022. Noncompliance is the result of Respondent's failure to comply with all requirements of the Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses (TPAPN), or the Arkansas Nurses Alternative Program as an alternative to TPAPN, in that Respondent failed to return the items necessary to initiate participation in the Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses (TPAPN), or the Arkansas Nurses Alternative Program as an alternative to TPAPN, within the required time frame. Section I, Stipulation A, B, and C of the Agreed Order for Peer Assistance Program dated November 29, 2022, which states, in pertinent part:

“(A) Within forty-five (45) days following the effective date of this Order, RESPONDENT SHALL apply to TPAPN or the Arkansas Nurses Alternative Program as an alternative to TPAPN.”

“(B) Within ninety (90) days following the effective date of this Order, RESPONDENT SHALL sign and execute the TPAPN or the Arkansas Nurses Alternative Program participation agreement and complete the enrollment process...”

“(C) Upon acceptance into the TPAPN or the Arkansas Nurses Program, as applicable, RESPONDENT SHALL waive confidentiality and provide a copy of the executed participation agreement to the Texas Board of Nursing.”

On or about August 22, 2023, TPAPN referred Respondent back to the Board.”

7. On or about December 18, 2023, the Board provided notice to Respondent that an investigation was being initiated into alleged violations of the Nursing Practice Act and/or the Board's Rules and Regulations Relating to Nurse Education, Licensure, and Practice, as follows:
 - o On or about November 26, 2023, Respondent signed an Order for Voluntary Surrender from the Arkansas State Board of Nursing, wherein Respondent’s privilege to practice from the State of Texas in the State of Arkansas was surrendered.
8. On January 12, 2024, the Board received a notarized statement from Respondent voluntarily surrendering the right to practice nursing in Texas. A copy of Respondent's statement, dated January 11, 2024, is attached and incorporated herein by reference as part of this Order.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Pursuant to Texas Occupations Code, Sections 301.451 - 301.555, the Board has jurisdiction over this matter.
2. Notice was served in accordance with law.
3. The evidence received is sufficient to prove violation(s) of 22 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §217.12(1)(A),(9)&(11)(B).
4. The evidence received is sufficient cause pursuant to Section 301.452(b)(1),(8)&(10), Texas Occupations Code, to take disciplinary action against Vocational Nurse License

Number 343861, heretofore issued to MELANIE AMBER LASTER, including revocation of Respondent's license(s) to practice nursing in the State of Texas.

5. Under Section 301.453(c), Texas Occupations Code, the Board has the authority to accept the voluntary surrender of a license.
6. Under Section 301.453(d), Texas Occupations Code, as amended, the Board may impose conditions for reinstatement of licensure.
7. Any subsequent reinstatement of this license will be controlled by Section 301.453(d), Texas Occupations Code, and 22 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §213.26-.29, and any amendments thereof in effect at the time of the reinstatement.

TERMS OF ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the VOLUNTARY SURRENDER of Vocational Nurse License Number 343861 is accepted by the Texas Board of Nursing. In connection with this acceptance, the Board imposes the following conditions:

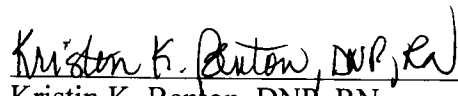
1. RESPONDENT SHALL NOT practice vocational nursing, use the title "vocational nurse" or the abbreviation "LVN" or wear any insignia identifying herself/himself as a vocational nurse or use any designation which, directly or indirectly, would lead any person to believe that RESPONDENT is a vocational nurse during the period in which the license is surrendered.
2. RESPONDENT SHALL NOT petition for reinstatement of licensure until at least one (1) year has elapsed from the date of this Order.
3. Upon petitioning for reinstatement, RESPONDENT SHALL satisfy all then existing requirements for relicensure.

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IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Order SHALL be applicable to Respondent's nurse licensure compact privileges, if any, to practice nursing in the State of Texas.

Effective this 12th day of January, 2024



Kristin K. Benton, DNP, RN
Executive Director on behalf
of said Board

MELANIE AMBER LASTER
6101 Alcoa Road Apt 611, Apt 915, Benton, AR 72015
LVN LICENSE NUMBER 343861

Voluntary Surrender Statement

Dear Texas Board of Nursing:

I no longer desire to be licensed as a nurse. Accordingly, I voluntarily surrender my license(s) to practice nursing in the State of Texas. I consent to the entry of an Order with findings reflecting the alleged conduct and which outlines requirements for reinstatement of my license. I understand that I can be represented by an attorney in this matter. I waive attorney representation, notice, administrative hearing, and judicial review of the Order entered by the Board. I understand that I may not petition for reinstatement until one (1) year from the effective date of the Order. I understand that I will be required to comply with the Board's Rules and Regulations in effect at the time I submit any petition for reinstatement.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

LVN LICENSE NUMBER 343861

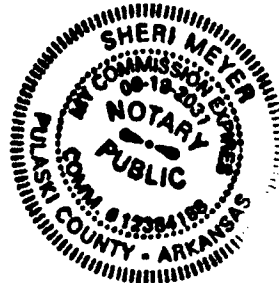
The State of Texas

Before me, the undersigned authority, on this date personally appeared MELANIE AMBER LASTER who, being duly sworn by me, stated that he or she executed the above for the purpose therein contained and that he or she understood same.

Sworn to before me the 11 day of January, 2024.

SEAL

Sheri Meyer
Notary Public in and for the State of Arkansas
Exp 9-19-31





I do hereby certify this to be a complete, accurate, and true copy of the document which is on file or is of record in the offices of the Texas Board of Nursing.
Katherine A. Thomas
Executive Director of the Board

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

In the Matter of § AGREED ORDER
Vocational Nurse License Number 343861 §
issued to MELANIE AMBER LASTER §
§

On this day the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, considered the matter of MELANIE AMBER LASTER, Vocational Nurse License Number 343861, hereinafter referred to as Respondent.

Information received by the Board produced evidence that Respondent may be subject to discipline pursuant to Section 301.452(b)(8)&(12), Texas Occupations Code.

Respondent waived notice and hearing and agreed to the entry of this Agreed Order approved by Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN, Executive Director, on May 11, 2022.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Prior to the institution of Agency proceedings, notice of the matters specified below in these Findings of Fact was served on Respondent and Respondent was given an opportunity to show compliance with all requirements of the law for retention of the license(s).
2. Respondent waived notice and hearing, and agreed to the entry of this Agreed Order.
3. Respondent's license to practice as a professional nurse in the State of Texas is in current status.
4. Respondent received a Certificate in Vocational Nursing from Temple Junior College, Temple, Texas, on May 1, 2018. Respondent was licensed to practice vocational nursing in the State of Texas on June 28, 2018.
5. Respondent's nursing employment history includes:

6/2018 – 9/2019	Unknown	Hillside Medical Lodge Gatesville, Texas
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Respondent's nursing employment history continued:

9/2019 – 7/2020	LVN	UTMB Texas Department of Corrections Lane Murray Unit Gatesville, Texas
8/2020 – 9/2020	Not employed in nursing	
10/2020 – 4/2021	LVN (travel/contract)	Wellpath Nashville, Tennessee
5/2021 – 10/2021	LVN	Amberwood Health and Rehabilitation Benton, Arkansas
11/2021	Unknown	Unknown
12/2021 – 7/2022	LVN	Grifols Plasma Center Little Rock, Arkansas
8/2022 – Present	Not employed in nursing	

6. At the time of the initial incident, Respondent was employed as a Licensed Vocational Nurse with UTMB Texas Department of Corrections Lane Murray Unit, Gatesville, Texas, and had been in that position for ten (10) months.
7. On or about July 2020, Respondent may have lacked fitness to practice nursing, in that she was admitted to rehab, and was treated for a substance use disorder that could have resulted in an injury to a patient or the public. Respondent's condition could have affected her ability to recognize subtle signs, symptoms or changes in patient's conditions, and could have affected her ability to make rational, accurate and appropriate assessments, judgments and decisions regarding patient care, thereby placing the patients in potential danger.
8. On or about July 13, 2022, Respondent received an Order of Cease and Desist from the Arkansas State Board of Nursing wherein Respondent's privilege to practice nursing from the State of Texas in the State of Arkansas was ordered to cease and desist. A copy of the Order of Cease and Desist from the Arkansas Board of Nursing, dated July 13, 2022, is attached and incorporated by reference as part of this pleading.
9. In response to Finding of Fact Number Seven (7), Respondent states that in March 2020, she suffered from three (3) herniated disks in her back, which eventually led to her taking medical leave for 5 months. Respondent explains that her PCP prescribed her Klonopin to help her with anxiety, and over time, she began to abuse it along with prescription opioids and alcohol. Respondent relates she felt that she could not handle her new reality so she

turned to substances to cope. Respondent states that at the end of July 2020, her family intervened and took her to detox at a facility in Arkansas, where she spent five (5) days, and then voluntarily admitted herself for a thirty-day rehabilitation program where she was treated for PTSD, clinical depression and a substance use disorder. In response to Finding of Fact Number Eight (8), Respondent states she spoke with the Arkansas Board of Nursing, who informed her they are waiting for the Texas Board of Nursing to complete their investigation.

10. Respondent's compliance with the terms of a Board approved peer assistance program should be sufficient to protect patients and the public.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Pursuant to Texas Occupations Code, Sections 301.451-301.555, the Board has jurisdiction over this matter.
2. Notice was served in accordance with law.
3. The evidence received is sufficient to prove violation(s) of 22 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §217.12(4)&(5).
4. The evidence received is sufficient cause pursuant to Section 301.452(b)(8)&(12), Texas Occupations Code, to take disciplinary action against Vocational Nurse License Number 343861, heretofore issued to MELANIE AMBER LASTER.
5. Pursuant to Section 301.463(d), Texas Occupations Code, this Agreed Order is a settlement agreement under Rule 408, Texas Rules of Evidence, in civil or criminal litigation.
6. The Board may, in its discretion, order a nurse to participate in a peer assistance program approved by the Board if the nurse would otherwise have been eligible for referral to peer assistance pursuant to Section 301.410, Texas Occupations Code.

TERMS OF ORDER

I. PEER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

IT IS THEREFORE AGREED and ORDERED that RESPONDENT SHALL comply with the following conditions for such a time as is required for RESPONDENT to

successfully complete the Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses (TPAPN) or the Arkansas Nurses Alternative Program as an alternative to TPAPN:

- A. Within forty-five (45) days following the effective date of this Order, RESPONDENT SHALL apply to TPAPN or the Arkansas Nurses Alternative Program as an alternative to TPAPN.
- B. Within ninety (90) days following the effective date of this Order, RESPONDENT SHALL sign and execute the TPAPN or the Arkansas Nurses Alternative Program participation agreement and complete the enrollment process. If enrolling in TPAPN, the enrollment process SHALL include payment of a non-refundable participation fee payable to TPAPN in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500.00), if licensed as a registered nurse, or in the amount of three hundred fifty dollars (\$350.00), if licensed as a vocational nurse.
- C. Upon acceptance into the TPAPN or the Arkansas Nurses Alternative Program, as applicable, RESPONDENT SHALL waive confidentiality and provide a copy of the executed participation agreement to the Texas Board of Nursing.
- D. RESPONDENT SHALL comply with all requirements of the applicable participation agreement during its term and SHALL keep all applicable license(s) to practice nursing in the State of Texas in current status.
- E. RESPONDENT SHALL CAUSE the applicable program to notify the Texas Board of Nursing of any violation of the participation agreement.
- F. This Order SHALL apply to any and all future licenses issued to RESPONDENT to practice nursing in the State of Texas.
- G. This Order SHALL be applicable to RESPONDENT'S nurse licensure compact privileges, if any, to practice nursing in the State of Texas.
- H. Until successfully completed, RESPONDENT may not practice nursing in the State of Texas except in accordance with the terms of this Order.
- I. As a result of this Order, RESPONDENT'S license(s) will be designated "single state" as applicable and RESPONDENT may not work outside the State of Texas in another nurse licensure compact party state using a Texas compact license.

II. COMPLIANCE WITH LAW

While under the terms of this Order, RESPONDENT agrees to comply in all respects with the Nursing Practice Act, Texas Occupations Code, §§301.001 *et seq.*, the Rules and Regulations Relating to Nursing Education, Licensure and Practice, 22 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §§211.1 *et seq.*, and this Agreed Order.

III. SUPERSEDING ORDER

IT IS FURTHER AGREED and ORDERED that the sanction and conditions of this Agreed Order SHALL supersede all previous stipulations required by any Order entered by the Texas Board of Nursing.

IV. REMEDIAL EDUCATION COURSE(S)

In addition to any continuing education requirements the Board may require for licensure renewal, RESPONDENT SHALL successfully complete the following remedial education course(s) **within one (1) year of the effective date of this Order, unless otherwise specifically indicated:**

A Board-approved course in Texas nursing jurisprudence and ethics that shall be a minimum of six (6) hours in length. The course's content shall include the Nursing Practice Act, standards of practice, documentation of care, principles of nursing ethics, confidentiality, professional boundaries, and the Board's Disciplinary Sanction Policies regarding: Sexual Misconduct; Fraud, Theft, and Deception; Nurses with Substance Abuse, Misuse, Substance Dependency, or other Substance Use Disorder; and Lying and Falsification. Courses focusing on malpractice issues will not be accepted. Home study and video programs will not be approved.

In order to receive credit for completion of this/these course(s), RESPONDENT SHALL CAUSE the instructor to submit a Verification of Course Completion form or SHALL submit the continuing education certificate, as applicable, to the attention of Monitoring at the Board's office. RESPONDENT SHALL first obtain Board approval of any course prior to enrollment if the course is not being offered by a pre-approved provider. *Information about Board-approved courses and Verification of Course Completion forms are available from the Board at www.bon.texas.gov/compliance.*

V. CONSEQUENCES OF CONTINUED NONCOMPLIANCE

Continued noncompliance with the unfulfilled requirements of this or any Order previously issued by the Texas Board of Nursing, as applicable, may result in further investigation and subsequent disciplinary action, including denial of licensure renewal or revocation of RESPONDENT'S license(s) and/or privileges to practice nursing in the State of Texas.

VI. EFFECT OF NONCOMPLIANCE

SHOULD RESPONDENT fail to comply with this Order or the terms of the participation agreement with the TPAPN, such noncompliance will result in further disciplinary action including TEMPORARY SUSPENSION pursuant to Section 301.4551, Texas Occupations Code, or REVOCATION of RESPONDENT'S license(s) and nurse licensure compact privileges, if any, to practice nursing in the State of Texas.

VII. RESTORATION OF UNENCUMBERED LICENSE(S)

Upon full compliance with the terms of this Agreed Order, all encumbrances will be removed from RESPONDENT'S license(s) and/or privilege(s) to practice nursing in the State of Texas and, subject to meeting all existing eligibility requirements in Texas Occupations Code Chapter 304, Article III, RESPONDENT may be eligible for nurse licensure compact privileges, if any.

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RESPONDENT'S CERTIFICATION

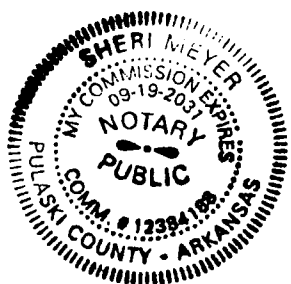
I understand that I have the right to legal counsel prior to signing this Order. I waive representation by counsel. I have reviewed this Order. I neither admit nor deny the violation(s) alleged herein. I do acknowledge possessing a diagnosis that deems me eligible to participate in the Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses. By my signature on this Order, I agree to the entry of this Order and all conditions of said Order to obtain disposition of the allegations through peer assistance and to avoid further disciplinary action in this matter. I waive judicial review of this Order. I understand that this Order becomes effective upon acceptance by the Executive Director on behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing and a copy will be mailed to me. I understand that if I fail to comply with all terms and conditions of this Order, I will be subject to investigation and disciplinary sanction, including TEMPORARY SUSPENSION pursuant to Section 301.4551, Texas Occupations Code, and/or possible revocation of my license(s) and/or privileges to practice nursing in the State of Texas, as a consequence of my noncompliance.

Signed this 22 day of November, 2022.

Melanie Amber Laster
MELANIE AMBER LASTER, RESPONDENT

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 22 day of Nov, 2022.

SEAL



Sheri Meyer
Notary Public in and for the State of Arkansas
Exp 9-19-31

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, the Executive Director, on behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing does hereby ratify and adopt the Agreed Order that was signed on the 22nd day of November, 2022, by MELANIE AMBER LASTER, Vocational Nurse License Number 343861, and said Agreed Order is final.

Effective this 29th day of November, 2022.



Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director on behalf
of said Board