

IN THE MATTER OF

*

BEFORE THE MARYLAND

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CHRISTOGONUS CHIKWE

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BOARD OF NURSING

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License Number: LP50997

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OAG CASE No. 21 – BP - 049

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Multi-state Licensure Privilege

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**ORDER FOR SUMMARY SUSPENSION OF LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE
LICENSE
AND
MULTI-STATE LICENSURE PRIVILEGE
PURSUANT TO SECTION 10-226(c)(2) OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE
ACT**

The Maryland Board of Nursing (the “Board”) hereby orders the **SUMMARY SUSPENSION** of the Licensed Practical Nurse license, license number **LP50997** and **Multi-State Licensure Privilege** (“MSLP”) (Florida RN9536719), of **CHRISTOGONUS CHIKWE** (the “Respondent”), in the State of Maryland. The Board takes this action pursuant to the authority of Maryland Code Ann., State Government Article (“SG”) § 10-226 (c) (2) (2021 Repl. Vol.), which provides:

- A unit may order summarily the suspension of a license if the unit:
 - (i) finds that the public health, safety, or welfare imperatively requires emergency action; and
 - (ii) promptly gives the licensee:
 1. Written notice of the suspension, the finding and the reasons that support the finding; and
 2. An opportunity to be heard.

The Board has reason, as set forth below, to find that the public health, safety, or welfare imperatively requires emergency action under SG § 10-226 (c) (2).

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**INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS AND REASONS IN SUPPORT
OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION**

Based on investigatory information obtained by, received by, made known to and available to the Board, the Board has reason to believe that the following facts are true:¹

1. On September 11, 2013, the Respondent was issued a Licensed Practical Nurse (“LPN”) license in the State of Maryland. The Respondent’s LPN license is “non-renewed” and expired on December 28, 2020.
2. On June 8, 2020, the Respondent was issued a Registered Nurse (RN) license, license number RN9536719, in the State of Florida.² The Respondent’s Florida RN license has an “active-multistate”³ status and is due to expire on April 30, 2022.

MARYLAND APPLICATION FOR EXAM OF LPN LICENSE (“LPN APPLICATION”)

3. The Respondent submitted an LPN Application, dated, and signed July 18, 2013, and affirmed “that the contents of this document are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.” The School of Nursing Education Certification (“Certification”) was completed and signed by Director of Nursing Program (“Director”), who certified the following:

It is hereby certified that Christogonus Uchenna Chikwe received from the [LPN School] located in Woodbridge, Virginia, a diploma dated 5/17/2013 which certified that he completed in full a 13 months [sic] program in nursing that began 1/23/2012 and ended 5/7/203 [sic]. It is further certified that the program was approved by the Virginia Board of Nursing at the time the applicant graduated, and that the applicant demonstrated an oral competence in the ENGLISH language and that his academic and professional standing during his program was satisfactory to officers at this school.

¹The statements regarding the Respondent’s conduct identified herein are intended to provide the Respondent with reasonable notice of the asserted facts. They are not intended as, and do not necessarily represent, a complete description of the evidence, either documentary or testimonial, to be offered against the Respondent.

² The Respondent indicated on the Florida RN Exam Application that he attended RN School in Florida and graduated on February 6, 2019. RN School is not an approved Maryland Board of Nursing out-of-state RN school.

³ Under the Nurse Licensure Compact (“Compact”), Maryland Nurse Practice Act § 8-7A-01, Florida is a compact state, and the Respondent is allowed to practice under the multi-state licensure privilege in any state that is a party to the Compact. The State of Maryland is a party to the Compact.

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LPN SCHOOL

4. On July 21, 2010, the Virginia Board of Nursing approved a Consent Order, ordering that [LPN School] be placed on Conditional Provisional Approval for not less than one (1) year, subject to terms and conditions. The Consent Order was signed by LPN School’s Program Director (“Director”).⁴
5. On May 15, 2012, the Virginia Board of Nursing approved a Consent Order, signed by Director. The May 15, 2012 - Consent Order orders that:
 - i. [LPN School’s] approval to operate a practical nursing education program in Virginia is WITHDRAWN. [LPN School] shall cease operations no later than June 30, 2013, when all students shall either have graduated or transferred to an approved program.
 - ii. [LPN School] shall not admit any new or transfer students.

THE RESPONDENT’S LPN SCHOOL OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

6. The Official Transcript, signed by Executive Program Director (“Director”) and dated July 12, 2013, provides the following information:

<u>FIRST QUARTER</u>		<u>THIRD QUARTER</u>	
From: 01/23/2012 To: 03/23/2012		From: 07/16/2012 To 11/02/2012	
<u>Course Description</u>	<u>Contact Hours</u>	<u>Course Description</u>	<u>Contact Hours</u>
Basic Computer	30	Med/Surg I	120
Medical Terminology	60	Med/Surg II	120
Anatomy and Physiology	180	Med/Surg Clinical	200
Total Contact Hours Required	270	Med/Surg Lab	40
		Geriatrics Theory	30
		Geriatrics Clinical	40
		Total Contact Hours Required	550
<u>SECOND QUARTER</u>		<u>FOURTH QUARTER</u>	
From: 03/26/2012 To: 07/13/2012		From: 11/05/2012 To: 05/17/2013	
<u>Course Description</u>	<u>Contact Hours</u>	<u>Course Description</u>	<u>Contact Hours</u>
Diet and Nutrition	60	Pediatric Nursing	90
Pharmacology	120	Pediatric Nursing Clinical	40
Nursing Fundamentals	210	Maternity Nursing	90
Nursing Fundamentals Lab	60	Maternity Clinical	40
Nursing Fundamentals Clinical	40	Mental Health Nursing	30

⁴ Program Director completed and signed the Certification on the Respondent’s LPN Application, as Director of Nursing Program.

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Total Contact Hours	490	Mental Health Clinical	40
		Professional Development & NCLEX Review	60
		Total Contact Hours Required	390

Summary of Clinical Agencies/Facilities and dates for each experience

Clinical Courses	Clinical Agency	Clinical Start Date	Clinical End Date	Total Hours
Fundamentals of Nsg.	[Site A]	7/9/12	7/13/12	40
Medical-Surgical Nsg.	[Sites A, B, C]	09/17/12	10/19/12	200
Geriatrics Nsg.	[Site D]	10/29/12	11/02/12	40
Maternity Nsg.	[Site E]	02/4/13	02/08/13	40
Pediatrics Nsg.	[Site E]	02/11/13	02/15/13	40
Mental Health Nsg.	[Site F]	03/04/13	03/08/13	40

THE BOARD’S INVESTIGATION:

7. On August 5, 2021, a Board Investigator contacted the General Counsel for Clinical Sites B, C and D, requesting information on any agreements with LPN School. On August 5, 2021, the General Counsel responded by email, stating “I searched our contracts database and do not find any contracts with [LPN School]. Additionally, as a skilled nursing facility, I do not believe we would have hosted clinicals for surgical nursing.”
8. On August 6, 2021, a Board Investigator contacted Clinical Site E’S Executive Director by phone. Executive Director stated that Clinical Site E does not offer OB/GYN or pediatric care and that the program offers services to troubled teens, there are no nurses on staff and the program does not offer any medical services.
9. On August 25, 2021, the Board’s staff was notified by email that Clinical Site F “does not have any affiliation or contracts with any nursing institute for any clinical hours.”

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10. In a letter dated September 8, 2021, the Board's staff was notified by Clinical Site A, "we regret to inform you that after searching our records, we were unable to locate any school agreement for clinical rotations with [LPN School]."
11. On September 13, 2021, the Respondent was interviewed under oath and provided the following information:
 - i. He has been employed at Facility⁵, in Baltimore, since 2018 as a "floor nurse" and was an LPN from 2018 until 2020, when he started working as a RN.
 - ii. In 2009 he attended an LPN program at another school but was unable to pass the exit exam.
 - iii. He transferred to LPN School in November 2012. He initially met with Director, who reviewed his transcript, and he was told he would start with "the class that was about to graduate." He was charged about \$5000 and made payments over five to six months in cash to Director.
 - iv. He attended classes four days/week from 7 am to 3 pm, he did not attend any clinicals and completed the program at LPN School in May 2013.
 - v. Director gave him a "sealed envelope" to take to the MBON with his application.
 - vi. He acknowledged completing and signing the MD LPN Application. Director completed the school certification information, and he was told to sign the application. He did not review the information completed by Director.⁶
 - vii. The LPN School start date on the application and transcript (January 23, 2012) is incorrect.
 - viii. The only courses listed on the transcript that he completed are Med/Surg Lab, Mental Health Nursing and Professional Development. He did not attend any of the clinicals listed on the transcript.
 - ix. He realized the information on the transcript was incorrect when he was already licensed and while he was trying to get a job. He did not confront Director or contact the MBON.
 - x. He attended RN school in Florida and obtained his Florida RN license in 2020.⁷

⁵ A skilled nursing facility.

⁶ On or about July 8, 2021, in the U.S. District Court of Maryland, Director was indicted on charges of Conspiracy to Commit Health Care Fraud; Conspiracy to Commit False Statements Relating to Health Care Matters and False Statements Relating to Health Care Matters. According to the Criminal Complaint, Director conspired with two other individuals and submitted false statements relating to health care matters by working together to sell fraudulent transcripts and diplomas that indicate that various individuals completed necessary courses and clinical hours to obtain nursing degrees and coached these unqualified individuals to pass the nursing board exam.

⁷ On or about March 5, 2019, the Respondent submitted a Florida RN Exam Application and provided a Maryland address and declared Maryland as his Primary State of Residence.

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DISCUSSION

12. The Respondent submitted a Maryland LPN application with fraudulent information about his LPN School, including fraudulent dates of attendance, and submitted a fraudulent transcript, resulting in the Board issuing an LPN license to the Respondent in September 2013. The Respondent admitted to completing only three (3) of the twenty-one (21) courses listed on the transcript and did not complete any clinical courses. The Respondent did not meet the Board's statutory and regulatory requirements, didactic and clinical training, for LPN licensure by exam and knowingly practiced on the fraudulent LPN license. The Respondent holds an active, multi-state Florida RN license and graduated from a RN school that is not approved by the Maryland Board of Nursing. The Respondent's continued practice poses a serious risk and danger to the public health, safety, and welfare.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

Based on the foregoing investigative findings and reasons, the Board finds that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action in this case pursuant to Md. Code Ann., State Govt. § 10-226 (c)(2) (2021 Repl. Vol.).

ORDER

It is hereby:

ORDERED that pursuant to the authority vested in the Board of Nursing by Maryland Code Ann., State Govt. § 10-226 (c)(2) (2021 Repl. Vol.), the Licensed Practical Nurse license, license number **LP50997**, and **MULTI-STATE LICENSURE PRIVILEGE (FL RN9536719)**, of **CHRISTOGONUS CHIKWE**, in the State of Maryland are hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDED**; and be it further

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ORDERED that there will be a Show Cause Hearing on **December 15, 2021, at 10:00 AM** before the Board at the Maryland Board of Nursing offices, 4140 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21215; and be it further

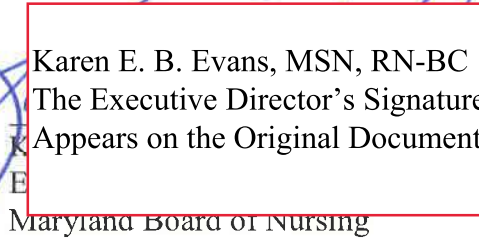
ORDERED that if, the suspension of the Respondent's license and MSLP is continued following a Show Cause Hearing, the Respondent has the right to a full evidentiary hearing before the Board and a hearing will be scheduled before the Board if the Respondent submits a written request for an evidentiary hearing to the Board **no later than thirty (30) days from the date of the Board's written decision issued after the Show Cause Hearing;** and be it further

ORDERED that if the Respondent does not submit a timely written request to the Board for an evidentiary hearing within 30 days from the date of the Board's written decision issued after the Show Cause Hearing, the Respondent shall have waived all rights now and in the future to any hearing on the merits of the summary suspension of the Respondent's license, MSLP, and the factual allegations contained in this Order for Summary Suspension; and it is further

ORDERED that this Order for Summary Suspension shall remain in effect and the summary suspension of the Respondent's license and MSLP shall continue until further Order of the Board; and it is further

ORDERED that this, "Order for Summary Suspension of Licensed Practical Nurse License and Multi-State Licensure Privilege" is a **PUBLIC RECORD** pursuant to Md. Code Ann., General Provisions § 4-101 *et seq.* & § 4-333 (2019 Repl. Vol.).

November 30, 2021
Date


Karen E. B. Evans, MSN, RN-BC
The Executive Director's Signature
Appears on the Original Document
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Maryland Board of Nursing