



# News Release

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## State disciplines health care providers

**OLYMPIA** -- The Washington State Department of Health has taken disciplinary actions or withdrawn charges against the following health care providers in our state.

The department's Health Systems Quality Assurance Division works with boards, commissions, and advisory committees to set licensing standards for more than 80 health care professions (e.g., dentists, nurses, counselors). Information about disciplinary action taken against medical doctors and physician assistants can be found on the [Washington Medical Commission \(WMC\) website](#). Questions about WMC disciplinary actions can be sent to [media@wmc.wa.gov](mailto:media@wmc.wa.gov).

Information about health care providers is on the agency website. Click on "[Look up a health care provider license](#)" in the "How Do I?" section of the [Department of Health website](#) ([doh.wa.gov](http://doh.wa.gov)). The site includes information about a health care provider's license status, the expiration and renewal date of their credential, disciplinary actions and copies of legal documents issued after July 1998. This information is also available by calling 360-236-4700. Consumers who think a health care provider acted unprofessionally are encouraged to call and report their complaint.

## King County

In May 2022 the Unlicensed Practice Program notified **Christine Helkey** of its intent to issue a cease-and-desist order. Helkey allegedly represented herself as a physician, specifically a cardiothoracic surgeon, but has never held such a credential.

In June 2022 the secretary of health ended conditions on the substance use disorder professional trainee license of **Denis Edward Jesse LeClech** (CO61026236).

In June 2022 the Nursing Commission charged advanced registered nurse practitioner and registered nurse **Sandra J. Kennedy** (AP30003689-NP, RN00099564) with unprofessional conduct. Kennedy allegedly failed to comply with a Nursing Commission request for an explanation and records, and failed to respond to a subpoena for records.

In June 2022 the secretary of health reinstated the registered nursing assistant license of **Tiffany Briana Lofton** (NA60453795).

In June 2022 the Nursing Commission charged licensed practical nurse **Carlos Garzilazo** (LP60643011) with unprofessional conduct. Garzilazo allegedly improperly administered

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medication to multiple patients. Garzilazo administered diazepam intended for one patient to another, did not administer insulin to a patient who was scheduled to receive it, and applied a clonidine patch to a patient a day early.

### **Pierce County**

In June 2022 the Nursing Commission charged licensed practical nurse **Jennifer L. Hanks** (LP60101088) with unprofessional conduct. Hanks allegedly withdrew controlled substances, including oxycodone, without documenting the administration or wastage of the medications.

In June 2022 the Substance Use Disorder Professional Program charged chemical dependency professional (now substance use disorder professional) **Sonia Catherine Kim** (CP60777107) with unprofessional conduct. In 2017, Kim pleaded guilty to one count of an indictment that included conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine in federal court. She allegedly did not report her conviction when renewing her credential.

### **Spokane County**

In June 2022 the secretary of health granted with conditions an agency affiliated counselor credential to **Joseph Avila** (CG61181911). He has been convicted of several alcohol-related driving charges since 2006, including two charges of reckless driving in Spokane Municipal Court in October 2021.

In June 2022 the Dental Commission ended conditions on the dentist license of **Robert Manuel Pinon** (DE60501352).

In June 2022 the Nursing Assistant Program charged certified nursing assistant **Shanna Marie Whitaker** (NC60076819) with unprofessional conduct. The charges state that Whitaker did not respond to allegations that she had an inappropriate relationship with a patient at the psychiatric hospital where she worked.

### **Out of State**

**Oklahoma:** In June 2022 the Nursing Commission charged licensed practical nurse **Tracy Lynn Hudson** (LP60636125) with unprofessional conduct after the Oklahoma Board of Nursing severely reprimanded Hudson and required certain conditions be met, based on Hudson's misuse of controlled substances.

**Oregon:** In June 2022 the Substance Use Disorder Professional Trainee program charged substance use disorder professional trainee **Jaimie Brienne Nelson** (CO61146060) with unprofessional conduct. Nelson failed to respond to a Department of Health investigator's request for an explanation to a complaint filed against Nelson.

**Montana:** In June 2022 the Nursing Commission denied the registered nurse license application of **Jeremy Jacob Morast** (RN61204203). In 2020, Morast bit his 16-year-old daughter in the face for not doing her chores. The Commission had required a substance use and psychological evaluation as part of the application, but Morast failed to submit the evaluations.

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**Utah:** In June 2022 the Nursing Commission and registered nurse **Ashley Verona Stone** (RN60279309) entered an agreement that reinstates Stone's license with conditions. Stone must participate in the intake process with a substance use monitoring program.

**Note to Editors:** Health care providers charged with unprofessional conduct have 20 days to respond to the Department of Health in writing. The case then enters the settlement process. If no disciplinary agreement can be reached, the case will go to a hearing.

The [DOH website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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