



State of Louisiana
Office of the Governor
Office of State Inspector General

May 16, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Former Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs Nurse
Arrested on Felony Warrant**

Nurse falsified records following patient death at Veterans Home

Baton Rouge – Today, Cheryl A. Poirrier of LaPlace was arrested on a felony warrant obtained by the Louisiana Office of State Inspector General for multiple counts of Filing False Public Records and Malfeasance. Poirrier, 58, was formerly employed by the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs as a Licensed Practical Nurse at the Southeast Louisiana War Veterans Home in Reserve, Louisiana.

OIG began its investigation after receiving information that records pertaining to the care of a resident at the Veterans Home had been intentionally falsified. The investigation revealed the following:

On January 8, 2015 at approximately 9:20 pm, a nursing assistant discovered that a resident at the Veterans Home had fallen in his room, and was on the floor with his wheelchair on top of him. Poirrier, the on-duty nurse, was summoned to the room, where the resident complained of back and head pain. The resident was returned to his bed. Some 8 hours later, the resident was found unresponsive in his room and it was determined that he had died during the night.

Veterans Affairs policy requires that when a resident has an unobserved fall, nursing staff must obtain and document neurological signs at designated times over the next 72 hours. These are referred to as “neuro checks”.

OIG investigators determined that after the resident’s death was discovered, Poirrier prepared and filed reports falsely stating that she had performed four separate neuro checks on the resident. These reports were entered into the system between 7:40 am

and 7:48 am on January 9, 2015. Investigation determined that Poirrier conducted no neuro checks on the resident.

Based on the above, a felony warrant was obtained for four counts of Filing False Public Records (La. R.S. 14:133) and one count of Malfeasance in Office (La. R.S. 14:134). The warrant was signed by 40th Judicial District Judge J. Sterling Snowdy. Poirrier was booked into the St. John Parish Prison by members of the Louisiana Department of Justice Fugitive Apprehension Unit.

Louisiana Inspector General Stephen Street said, "We owe our Veterans the highest degree of professional care. Ms. Poirrier not only failed to honor that obligation, but made the situation worse by falsifying records to cover up that failure. That can never be tolerated. We will continue to do everything in our power to bring about criminal consequences in such cases. I want to thank Secretary Strickland and his staff for their cooperation during our investigation, as well as Attorney General Landry's Fugitive Unit for executing the arrest warrant."

Joey Strickland, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, stated, "I want to thank the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for their professionalism and for their thorough investigation into the allegations of misconduct by a former employee at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Home in Reserve. Caring for our Veterans is a privilege that the vast majority of our staff perform honorably every day. This former employee betrayed that honor, and that type of behavior will not be tolerated under my watch. I fully support the OIG findings and the action they are taking against her. I have already taken steps to fix the mistakes of the previous administration, ensuring that they will not happen again and that our Veterans will be cared for with the respect, honor, and dignity that they deserve."

STATE OF LOUISIANA
v.
Cheryl A. Poirrier
W/F, DOB: 08/04/1957
S.S.N. XXX-XX-5278
605 Bluebonnet Court Apt. A
Laplace, LA 70068

Jesse S. Perry
Criminal Investigator
Office of State Inspector General
(225) 342-4264
OIG File No. 16-0036-I

AFFIDAVIT

Before me, the undersigned authority, personally came and appeared Criminal Investigator Jesse S. Perry of the Louisiana Office of State Inspector General (OIG), who after being duly sworn, deposed and said:

That probable cause exists for the issuance of an arrest warrant for Cheryl A. Poirrier, a white female, born on August 4, 1957, who resides at 605 Bluebonnet Court Apt. A, Laplace, Louisiana for committing the following offenses between January 8, 2015 and January 9, 2015:

- Filing or Maintaining False Public Records (four counts), violations of La. R.S. 14:133A(3), and
- Malfeasance in Office, a violation of La. R.S. 14:134A(1) and (2).

Probable cause is based upon the following:

The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA) is responsible for the operation of healthcare facilities for war veterans (La. R.S. 36:781) and operates several Veterans Homes across the state of Louisiana, including the Southeast Louisiana War Veterans Home in Reserve (St. John the Baptist Parish), at which medical and nursing care is provided to eligible veterans, their spouses and Gold Star parents.

At all times material herein, Cheryl A. Poirrier, a licensed practical nurse (LPN) licensed by the Louisiana State Board of Practical Nurse Examiners, was an employee of LDVA and employed at the Southeast Louisiana War Veterans Home in Reserve where her duties included providing nursing care for residents on Unit 3 at the home, one of whom, identified herein as resident #0787, resided in room 301.

At approximately 9:20 p.m. on January 8, 2015 a nursing assistant discovered that resident #0787 had suffered an unobserved fall in his room. The nursing assistant reported that the resident was found on the floor with his wheelchair on top of him. Cheryl Poirrier, the on-duty LPN, was summoned to the room and the resident, who complained of back pain and head pain, was returned to his bed. At approximately 5:15 a.m. on January 9, 2015, approximately

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eight hours after the unobserved fall, resident #0787 was found unresponsive in his room and it was determined that he was deceased.

LDVA policies, adopted in compliance with Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC), Title 48, Chapter 97, "Nursing Facilities," and applicable to the Southeast Louisiana War Veterans Home, provide that an unobserved fall of a resident is to be treated as an incident involving a head injury. In the event of an incident with a head injury, written policy provides that the resident's neurological signs are to be obtained and documented every fifteen minutes for the first hour after the fall, then every hour for the next four hours and then each shift for the remainder of the 72 hour period following the fall ("neuro checks"). Neurological checkpoints that are to be monitored are as follows: (1) level of consciousness, (2) ability to move extremities, (3) eye response and changes in pupils and (4) vital signs.

The Office of State Inspector General conducted an investigation after receiving information concerning the intentional falsification of records pertaining to the care of resident #0787 after the above described fall, specifically regarding the performance of the neuro checks. OIG Investigators determined that four reports, prepared and electronically filed by the on-duty LPN, Cheryl Poirrier, and purporting to document the required neuro checks, were false as Poirrier did not perform the neuro checks. OIG investigators obtained copies of electronically entered documents that purport to show that Poirrier performed a required neuro check on resident #0787 at the following dates and times:

- 01/08/2015 9:35 p.m.
- 01/08/2015 9:50 p.m.
- 01/08/2015 10:20 p.m.
- 01/09/2015 2:20 a.m.

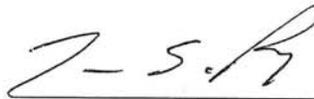
Computer records show that the above four reports were entered into the system by Cheryl Poirrier between 7:40 a.m. and 7:48 a.m. on January 9, 2015, after the death of resident #0787 had been discovered.

Supervisors at the Reserve facility reviewed the video surveillance coverage on Unit 3 which showed that Cheryl Poirrier did not conduct the neuro checks as required at the dates and times shown in the reports she prepared and electronically filed and, in fact, performed no neuro checks at all after resident #0787 suffered the unobserved fall. The affiant has obtained copies of the surveillance video coverage of the facility on the night of January 8-9, 2015 and has

confirmed that Cheryl Poirrier failed to conduct the neuro checks on resident #0787. The video also shows that after the fall Poirrier took numerous smoke breaks during the remainder of her shift as she can be seen on the designated smoking porch located approximately thirty (30) feet from room 301, the room of resident #0787.

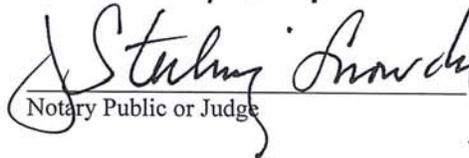
The affiant states that Cheryl A. Poirrier committed Filing or Maintaining False Public Records (La. R.S. 14:133A(3)) by filing four false reports, each of which purported to document a neuro check of resident #0787 when, in fact, the neurocheck was not performed.

The affiant further states that Cheryl A. Poirrier, a public employee of the State of Louisiana, committed Malfeasance in Office (La. R.S. 14:134A(1) and (2)) by intentionally failing to perform a duty lawfully required of her as the on-duty LPN responsible for the care of resident #0787 during the time described above.



Jesse S. Perry, Criminal Investigator
Louisiana Office of State Inspector General

Sworn to and subscribed before me on the 13 day of April 2016.



Notary Public or Judge

WARRANT

STATE OF LOUISIANA

40th JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

v.

PARISH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Cheryl A. Poirrier
W/F, DOB: 08/04/1957
S.S.N. XXX-XX-5278
605 Bluebonnet Court, Apt. A.
Laplace, La. 70068

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Filed: Apr 13, 2016 10:44 AM
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To the Sheriff or any Peace Officer:

Complaint having been made before me, upon oath of Criminal Investigator Jesse S. Perry of the Louisiana Office of State Inspector General, charging Cheryl A. Poirrier (W/F, DOB 08/04/1957), SSN#XXX-XX-5278) with committing:

- Filing or Maintaining False Public Records (four counts), violations of La. R.S. 14:133A(3), and
- Malfeasance in Office, a violation of La. R.S. 14:134A(1) and (2)

You are hereby commanded, in the name of the State of Louisiana, to apprehend and arrest the said accused and bring her before the Court to answer the complaint. You are further commanded to keep the said accused in safe custody until released according to law, and this shall be your warrant.

Given under my official signature this 13 day of April, 2016.

Stacy Rowdy
JUDGE, 40th JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE AND FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF THE ORIGINAL ON FILE AND OF RECORD IN MY OFFICE
Williams
CLERK OF COURT
PARISH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, LA
DATE 4/13/16