



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Drug Enforcement Administration

William Needham, N.P.; Decision and Order

On May 21, 2024, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA or Government) issued an Order to Show Cause (OSC) to William Needham, N.P., of Jackson, Mississippi (Registrant). Request for Final Agency Action (RFAA), Exhibit (RFAAX) 2, at 1, 4. The OSC proposed the revocation of Registrant’s Certificate of Registration No. MN5005788, alleging that Registrant’s registration should be revoked because Registrant is “currently without authority to prescribe, administer, dispense, or otherwise handle controlled substances in the State of Mississippi, the state in which [he is] registered with DEA.” *Id.* at 2 (citing 21 U.S.C. 824(a)(3)).¹

The OSC notified Registrant of his right to file a written request for hearing, and that if he failed to file such a request, he would be deemed to have waived his right to a hearing and be in default. *Id.* (citing 21 CFR 1301.43). Here, Registrant did not request a hearing. RFAA, at 1.² “A default, unless excused, shall be deemed to constitute a waiver of the [registrant’s] right to a hearing and an admission of the factual allegations of the [OSC].” 21 CFR 1301.43(e).

Further, “[i]n the event that a registrant . . . is deemed to be in default . . . DEA may then file a request for final agency action with the Administrator, along with a record to support its request. In such circumstances, the Administrator may enter a default final order pursuant to [21 C.F.R.] § 1316.67.” *Id.* § 1301.43(f)(1). Here, the Government has requested final agency action based on Registrant’s default, pursuant to 21 CFR 1301.43(c), (f), 1301.46. RFAA, at 1; *see also* 21 CFR 1316.67.

¹ According to Agency records, Registrant’s registration expired on December 31, 2024. The fact that a registrant allows his registration to expire during the pendency of an OSC does not impact the Agency’s jurisdiction or prerogative under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) to adjudicate the OSC to finality. *Jeffrey D. Olsen, M.D.*, 84 FR 68474, 68476-68479 (2019).

² Based on the Government’s submissions in its RFAA dated July 8, 2024, the Agency finds that service of the OSC on Registrant was adequate. Specifically, the included Form DEA-12 signed by Registrant indicates that Registrant was personally served a copy of the OSC by DEA officials on May 28, 2024. RFAAX 1, Attachment B.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Agency finds that, in light of Registrant's default, the factual allegations in the OSC are admitted. According to the OSC, on or about December 5, 2023, the State of Mississippi Board of Nursing suspended both Registrant's Mississippi registered nurse license and Registrant's Mississippi nurse practitioner license. RFAAX 2, at 2.

According to Mississippi online records, of which the Agency takes official notice, both Registrant's Mississippi registered nurse license and Registrant's Mississippi nurse practitioner license are revoked and expired.³ State of Mississippi Board of Nursing License Verification, <https://gateway.licensure.msbn.ms.gov/Verification/search.aspx> (last visited date of signature of this Order). Accordingly, the Agency finds that Registrant is not licensed to practice nursing nor licensed as a nurse practitioner in Mississippi, the state in which he is registered with DEA.

DISCUSSION

Pursuant to 21 U.S.C. 824(a)(3), the Attorney General is authorized to suspend or revoke a registration issued under 21 U.S.C. 823 "upon a finding that the registrant . . . has had his State license or registration suspended . . . [or] revoked . . . by competent State authority and is no longer authorized by State law to engage in the . . . dispensing of controlled substances." With respect to a practitioner, DEA has also long held that the possession of authority to dispense controlled substances under the laws of the state in which a practitioner engages in professional practice is a fundamental condition for obtaining and maintaining a practitioner's registration. *Gonzales v. Oregon*, 546 U.S. 243, 270 (2006) ("The Attorney General can register a physician to dispense controlled substances 'if the applicant is authorized to dispense . . . controlled substances under the laws of the State in which he practices.' . . . The very definition of a

³ Under the Administrative Procedure Act, an agency "may take official notice of facts at any stage in a proceeding – even in the final decision." United States Department of Justice, Attorney General's Manual on the Administrative Procedure Act 80 (1947) (Wm. W. Gaunt & Sons, Inc., Reprint 1979). Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 556(e), "[w]hen an agency decision rests on official notice of a material fact not appearing in the evidence in the record, a party is entitled, on timely request, to an opportunity to show the contrary." Accordingly, Registrant may dispute the Agency's finding by filing a properly supported motion for reconsideration of findings of fact within fifteen calendar days of the date of this Order. Any such motion and response shall be filed and served by e-mail to the other party and to Office of the Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration at dea.addo.attorneys@dea.gov.

‘practitioner’ eligible to prescribe includes physicians ‘licensed, registered, or otherwise permitted, by the United States or the jurisdiction in which he practices’ to dispense controlled substances. § 802(21).”). The Agency has applied these principles consistently. *See, e.g., James L. Hooper, M.D.*, 76 FR 71371, 71372 (2011), *pet. for rev. denied*, 481 F. App’x 826 (4th Cir. 2012); *Frederick Marsh Blanton, M.D.*, 43 FR 27616, 27617 (1978).⁴

According to Mississippi statute, “dispense” means “to deliver a controlled substance to an ultimate user or research subject by or pursuant to the lawful order of a practitioner, including the prescribing, administering, packaging, labeling or compounding necessary to prepare the substance for that delivery.” Miss. Code Ann. section 41-29-105(j) (2024). Further, a “practitioner” means a person “licensed, registered or otherwise permitted to distribute, dispense, conduct research with respect to or to administer a controlled substance in the course of professional practice or research in this state.” *Id.* section 41-29-105(y)(i). Because Registrant is not currently licensed as a registered nurse, nurse practitioner, or otherwise licensed in Mississippi, he is not authorized to dispense controlled substances in Mississippi.

Here, the undisputed evidence in the record is that Registrant currently lacks authority to practice nursing in Mississippi. As already discussed, a person must be a licensed practitioner to dispense a controlled substance in Mississippi. Thus, because Registrant lacks authority to practice nursing in Mississippi and, therefore, is not authorized to handle controlled substances in Mississippi, Registrant is not eligible to maintain a DEA registration. Accordingly, the Agency will order that Registrant’s DEA registration be revoked.

⁴ This rule derives from the text of two provisions of the CSA. First, Congress defined the term “practitioner” to mean “a physician . . . or other person licensed, registered, or otherwise permitted, by . . . the jurisdiction in which he practices . . . , to distribute, dispense, . . . [or] administer . . . a controlled substance in the course of professional practice.” 21 U.S.C. 802(21). Second, in setting the requirements for obtaining a practitioner’s registration, Congress directed that “[t]he Attorney General shall register practitioners . . . if the applicant is authorized to dispense . . . controlled substances under the laws of the State in which he practices.” 21 U.S.C. 823(g)(1). Because Congress has clearly mandated that a practitioner possess state authority in order to be deemed a practitioner under the CSA, DEA has held repeatedly that revocation of a practitioner’s registration is the appropriate sanction whenever he is no longer authorized to dispense controlled substances under the laws of the state in which he practices. *See, e.g., James L. Hooper, M.D.*, 76 FR 71371-72; *Sheran Arden Yeats, M.D.*, 71 FR 39130, 39131 (2006); *Dominick A. Ricci, M.D.*, 58 FR 51104, 51105 (1993); *Bobby Watts, M.D.*, 53 FR 11919, 11920 (1988); *Frederick Marsh Blanton, M.D.*, 43 FR 27617.

ORDER

Pursuant to 28 CFR 0.100(b) and the authority vested in me by 21 U.S.C. 824(a), I hereby revoke DEA Certificate of Registration No. MN5005788 issued to William Needham, N.P. Further, pursuant to 28 CFR 0.100(b) and the authority vested in me by 21 U.S.C. 823(g)(1), I hereby deny any pending applications of William Needham, N.P., to renew or modify this registration, as well as any other pending application of William Needham, N.P., for additional registration in Mississippi. This Order is effective **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

SIGNING AUTHORITY

This document of the Drug Enforcement Administration was signed on March 13, 2025, by Acting Administrator Derek Maltz. That document with the original signature and date is maintained by DEA. For administrative purposes only, and in compliance with requirements of the Office of the Federal Register, the undersigned DEA Federal Register Liaison Officer has been authorized to sign and submit the document in electronic format for publication, as an official document of DEA. This administrative process in no way alters the legal effect of this document upon publication in the Federal Register.

Heather Achbach,
Federal Register Liaison Officer,
Drug Enforcement Administration.

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