

Falsification Of Records: Nurse Did Not Perform Assessment Herself, Nurse’s Firing Upheld.

A nurse working in an outpatient cancer treatment clinic was confronted by the human relations manager and her nursing supervisor.

The nurse’s supervisor verified the facts the day before she confronted the nurse when she phoned the patient to discuss her medications, having been told by another staff member that the patient was not actually seen the nurse.

Nurse Charted Physician’s Statement As Her Own Patient Assessment

The nurse admitted to her nursing supervisor she charted *verbatim* what the patient’s physician relayed to her concerning the level of pain the patient reported to the physician.

The data was charted as the nurse’s own nursing assessment of the patient’s pain without the nurse ever having personally seen the patient herself.

The nurse misrepresented that she performed a professional assessment of her patient which she herself did not perform.

Falsification of patient records is a violation of the law. It is gross misconduct and permits the employer to terminate the employee.

It is not relevant whether the assessment was accurate or whether not seeing the patient impacted the quality of the patient’s care.

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY
April 5, 2010

The nurse testified in her defense that she was overtaxed by her workload and also stated that it was not uncommon at the clinic for herself and others to complete their required assessments by relying on what other professional staff told them, without personally seeing their patients.

That was no excuse for the nurse not to conduct and chart her required nursing assessments in a manner consistent with professional nursing standards, that is, she had to see her patient herself, the Superior Court of New Jersey ruled.

Further, the court said, it is not appropriate for a nurse to take advice from other professional staff, like a radiation therapist, as to the extent of a nurse’s professional obligations. **Fore v. Board of Review, 2010 WL 1329071 (N.J. App., April 5, 2010).**