



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PO BOX 360
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www.nj.gov/health

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

KAITLAN BASTON, MD, MSc, DFASAM
Commissioner

April 9, 2024

Andrew Palazzo

**Re: Notice of Summary Suspension of EMT certification
EMS ID # 629166
Investigation Control # 23-0666**

Dear Mr. Palazzo:

The New Jersey Department of Health (Department) is vested with the responsibility of carrying out the provisions of the Health Care Facilities Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 26:2H-1 to -27, which was enacted, in part, to ensure that all hospital and related health care services rendered in the State of New Jersey are of the highest quality. As defined at N.J.S.A. 26:2H-2(b), health care services include any pre-hospital care rendered by Basic Life Support personnel. In addition, the Emergency Medical Services Act, N.J.S.A. 26:2K-7 to -69, authorizes the Department to certify Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). In furtherance of the objectives set forth in the statutes, the Department has adopted regulations that govern the training, certification, and professional conduct of EMTs and EMT candidates. (See N.J.A.C. 8:40A-1.1 et seq.)

On December 11, 2023, the Department's Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) received notification that you may have committed a crime while working as an EMT on December 9, 2023. Consistent with OEMS regulatory authority and policy, the OEMS opened an investigation in response to this notification.

Upon opening the investigation, the OEMS investigator confirmed that you are currently certified by the OEMS as an EMT and have been certified as an EMT since May 29, 2018. Further, the investigator confirmed that you were charged with the following under Arrest No. 23-22055-AR in Holmdel Township, New Jersey:

1. Two (2) counts of Simple Assault in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1(a)1, and
2. One (a) count of Disorderly Conduct in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:33-2(a)1.

Specifically, it is alleged that, while you were working in the capacity of an EMT, you exhibited aggressive and erratic behavior toward staff of the Bayshore Medical

Center Emergency Department (BMCED) and you shoved, bit, and attempted to strike security personnel as they tried to escort you from BMCED. Witness reports note that after transporting a patient to BMCED, you went to check on the status of a patient you treated and transported to BMCED earlier in the day. After entering the treatment area for this patient to observe their condition, you went to the nurse's desk to tell BMCED staff that you observed blood around the patient's intravenous site, describing the patient as "bleeding out." The nursing staff assessed the situation and advised you that they had determined that the patient was not in any danger. Witnesses noted that you responded by aggressively pursuing entry into the patient's treatment area and that, after being denied entry, you began an audio and video recording inside BMCED. At this time, BMCED staff requested assistance from security personnel.

The BMCED security officers reported that they arrived at the scene of the incident and asked you to stop recording and to leave BMCED. The officers noted that, you responded by shouting and then aggressively shoving a security officer backward. The security officers then physically lowered you to the ground while you resisted, allegedly biting a security officer, and leaving a small red mark on his forearm. Police officers that later arrived at BMCED reported that you responded to questioning with aggressive behavior and yelling and that they had to restrain you in handcuffs until you were released from the scene.

As you are aware, EMTs must make important medical assessments and carry out appropriate medical interventions in difficult field locations for patients young and old, combative, and docile. In order to effectively care for all patients, EMTs must exercise good judgment and treat patients with dignity and respect. They are entrusted by the public to be there in times of need. Thus, EMTs must trust each other and be trusted by police officers, firefighters, doctors, and other professionals. In short, EMTs must be law-abiding and must be trusted to care for all patients in an appropriate, safe manner.

Based upon the foregoing, the Department has determined that your EMT certification must be **summarily suspended**. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:40A-10.2, "[t]he Commissioner, or his or her designee, may summarily suspend a person's EMT-Basic and/or EMT-Instructor certification when, in his or her opinion, the continued certification of that person poses an immediate or serious threat to the public health, safety or welfare." The above actions demonstrate that you not only have poor judgment and a lack of trustworthiness but that you pose a threat to patients. These behaviors and actions are incompatible with the duties of an EMT and the Department finds that your continued certification as an EMT constitutes an immediate and serious threat to public health, safety, and welfare. **Therefore, your certification as an EMT is immediately suspended. You may not, under any circumstances, act in the capacity of, or perform the duties of an EMT in New Jersey during this period of suspension.**

In the interim, the OEMS will continue to monitor the progression of your criminal case. After the charges against you have been resolved, and OEMS completes its

investigation, you will be advised of what action, if any, the OEMS will take with respect to your EMT certification.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:40A-10.3, you may appeal to the Commissioner of the Department of Health for emergency relief to contest this summary suspension. Your request for a hearing on this matter must be submitted in writing and must be accompanied by a response to the charges contained herein. Please include the investigation control number **23-0666** on your correspondence, and forward your request to:

New Jersey Department of Health
Office of Legal & Regulatory Compliance
P.O. Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360

Failure to submit a written request for emergency relief within 30 days from the date of this Notice shall be interpreted as an acceptance of this Department's decision to summarily suspend your EMT certification pending completion of its investigation, thereby forfeiting all rights to emergency relief. If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Daniel Kazar at (609) 633-7777 or via email at Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov.

Sincerely,



Candace Gardner, Paramedic
Director
Office of Emergency Medical Services

c: Daniel Kazar, Chief, Education, Licensure, and Enforcement, OEMS
Angela Kurkowski, Investigator, CIU
Mark Bober, Director of EMS, Hackensack Meridian JFK University Medical
Center
NREMT
File

SENT VIA REGULAR U.S. MAIL AND CERTIFIED MAIL #
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED