JUNE 4, 20XX

 via Fax: 512-305-6870

Texas Board of Nursing

333 Guadalupe Street, Ste 3-460

Austin, TX 78701

Re: KB, RN

Dear Ms. ,

 Please let this letter serve as an initial response to the Board of Nursing letter of investigation received by Ms. B dated JULY 8, 20xx. As we have discussed, K never received the first letter from the BON dated July 13, 20XX, and as soon as she received the June letter, she set out to respond and communicate with the Board of Nursing.

 First, let me state that KB takes full responsibility for her actions which she acknowledges as a violation of the Nursing Practice Act and all standards of good practice. She admits that she was addicted to opiates, but would like to stress to the Board that she has acted in a positive way to rectify that behavior. She also would like to let the Board know that this time in her life has been the only time she has had any type of drug or alcohol problem. In her own words, the following is K’s retelling of her medical issues that had some impact upon her poor choices:

 *“I did have Vicodin prescriptions during certain times, I believe in 2010 and 2011. I had back surgery three times from 2009-2011.  I tried many interventions to deal with this painful time, my surgeon tried different exercises and relaxation to help with the pain.*

*Finally, in April 2011 I agreed to have the last surgery to figure out why I had constant serious pain.*

 *Following the surgery I was prescribed pain medication. I would use what I was given and that was it, I never tried to obtain more medication than what my physician prescribed.*

 *Additionally, at the end of 2011 I went to the ER again for severe back pain. At that time they did an x-ray showing I had lumbar straightening. The normal curves of my spine were different then they should be...the lower spine was quite straight, they stated that it was because I had severe muscle spasms in my back causing both the pain and the straightening. I believe that the pain I was having caused these muscle spasms. I was given medication for that.*

 *I became dependent on these medications, and that along with frustration and very poor judgment led me to use medications while at work, and then to take them from the PYXIS. These are actions that I am embarrassed by, and for which I am very sorry.*

 *I have no other history of misuse of drugs or alcohol. I never abused anything else during any other time in my life. The times I was prescribed pain medications for medical conditions, I took what I was prescribed for pain and did not continue to seek it out, and I do not recall them having any refills on them. Nor did I ever buy any drug from anyone at any time.*

 *The only time I was using and abusing drugs was during those times at those two hospitals, as they were my only source for obtaining the meds. I also never tested positive for any drug upon my hiring drug screens. I did struggle with pain quite a bit from 2009-2012.  I may struggle with pain for the rest of my life, but I will never take from a hospital nor will I ask for any kind of prescriptions. I never want to find myself in that position again, and am confident that I have learned my lesson and changed my life. ”*

 K voluntarily admitted herself to an inpatient three week intensive therapy and rehabilitation program at Oak Hills Rehab in March of 20xx, and upon successful completion of that program took part in a three week intensive outpatient program which she completed in April of 20xx. She has remained sober since March of 20xx, is in a much healthier place personally, and continues with attendance at meetings. We have attached the Discharge Summary from the outpatient stay and a recordation of attendance at meetings to this response.

 K has been working at St. Mark’s Hospital in xxxx, Texas for almost one year as a successful NICU nurse, and is currently looking for an outpatient counsellor that she will be able to see on a monthly basis.

 We have both reviewed the medical records sent by both Hospitals, and while it may be possible to take issue with some of the particulars of what drugs were signed out of the PYXIS and when, we recognize that the particulars really are not the issue, but the fact that she did misappropriate medications is the factor to acknowledge, discuss, and ultimately to try to show the Board that she is in fact on a good and clean road for over one year and at this time.

 We have included here letters of recommendation from co-workers, one from xxx Hospital and two from her current position and from work she had prior to becoming a nurse. We also have included meeting attendance sheets reflecting consistent participation in meetings, her current resume, and we are awaiting an evaluation that should be completed in the near future.

 K values her license, her patients, her work. She has always wanted to be a nurse:

 “*Because I knew I wanted to be a nurse, I started to take college classes when I was still in High School during my senior year (dual credit classes). I graduated with 16 college hours. I then took 3 semesters of prerequisites  Fall 20xx- Spring 20xx. I applied to nursing school and was accepted the first go-round. I started nursing school in Fall 20xx and graduated in Spring 20xx. I remember I was very excited about this having turned 21yrs old and graduating nursing school within 2 weeks of each other! I was dedicated and felt accomplished and blessed knowing what I wanted to do and achieving it at a young age.*

 *I got my first job as an RN at xxx Hospital in August of 20xx, I truly loved my job. I enjoyed going there every day. How I became involved in behavior that is so horrible as I look back on it, I can never totally understand, all I can do is assure you at the Texas Board that I have taken responsibility for my actions and know how wrong I was. I have turned around a corner, have learned for the experience, and look forward to moving on with my family and career.”*

 K has recently written a message to the Texas Board that I include in this response, which is as follows:

"*Dear Texas Board of Nursing,*

 *I am writing this to you to let you know that I totally accept responsibility for my actions of the past and to say that I am truly sorry for all of that and for my bad judgment. I know that my actions potentially placed patients at risk and I feel gratified that no one came to any harm as a result of my behavior.*

 *I feel I have greatly grown from this experience. I am happy to say, I am doing so much better and I am finally excited about my life.*

 *I have remained sober and have high hopes and confidence that I will continue to be sober and live the life I am meant to.*

 *I now work at xxx Hospital in xxxx, TX as a NICU/Nursery nurse. I absolutely love my job and I am exceeding expectations. I have made dependable friends and grow everyday as a nurse, a mentor, and as a person. I am dependable and for my actions. I have been at xxx for almost a year now and I have been asked by management to become a charge nurse for our NICU/nursery unit and I am in the process of training now.*

 *I also have been a preceptor for all three newly hired nurses for the night shift over the past 3 months. I have been a big part of the educational department to help newly hired nurses become adjusted.*

 *I am truly excited about where I stand in my job today and I am doing exceptionally well. I also recently moved into a new house with my family and we are expecting a new baby. I am pregnant and busy getting ready for her arrival which is coming up on September 17, 2014.*

 *I am ecstatic and cannot wait to be a mom to my new baby. I want to be a good role model for her and for my husband’s daughter. I attend meetings and church weekly to keep me on track. I keep in touch with my peers whom I attended treatment with, and surround myself with sober positive people.*

 *I have an amazing, supportive, encouraging family. Everything is moving in a positive direction for me and my family. Although at times it was difficult, I can only say positive things about my experience, how I have grown, and what I have learned. I feel I am a better person and can handle what life has planned for me.*

 *Thank you for listening to me, KB"*

Although K acknowledges and accepts responsibility for her actions, we would also like to point out that no actual harm came to any child or family, although of course we know that the risk for that was always present.

 We believe that the Texas BON will require K to participate in some form of ongoing counseling and drug testing, which she is willing to do. Since she has successfully completed both an inpatient and outpatient program, and continues to attend meetings, we are hopeful that she may continue on this path as opposed to starting over with a TPAPN program. She is willing to undergo an evaluation by a BON approved substance abuse evaluator if the BON requires that as a prerequisite.

 We thank you for your attention to this matter, and appreciate the work of the Board of Nursing to protect the citizens of Texas from unsafe practice. Please call me to confirm you have received this letter.

 Very truly yours,

cc: KB RN