

**BEFORE THE OFFICE OF STATE ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS  
STATE OF GEORGIA**

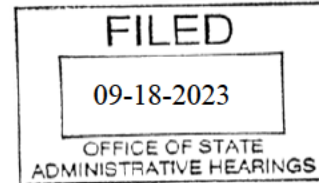
**KATELYN IRELAND,**  
**Petitioner,**

v.

**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC  
HEALTH,**  
**Respondent.**

**Docket No.: 2319163  
2319163-OSAH-DPH-EMS-142-Woodard**

**Agency Reference No.: 2319163**



**FINAL DECISION**

The Georgia Department of Public Health (“Department” or “Respondent”) seeks to suspend Petitioner Katelyn Ireland’s paramedic license pending the outcome of criminal charges against her in Colquitt County, Georgia. A hearing was conducted before the undersigned administrative law judge on August 17, 2023, at Tifton Municipal Court in Tifton, Georgia. Jeff Rickman, Esq. appeared on behalf of the Department. Dustin Land, Esq. appeared on behalf of Petitioner.

For the reasons stated below, the Department’s decision to suspend Petitioner’s paramedic license pending the outcome of the criminal charges against her is **AFFIRMED**.

**I. FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Petitioner has been a licensed paramedic in Georgia since 2021. Her license number is P031997. (OSAH Form 1; Exhibit R-1; Testimony of Kelly Joiner<sup>1</sup>).
2. On December 17, 2022, Petitioner shot and killed her roommate’s estranged husband, Jason Chad McCollum. She was arrested in Colquitt County, Georgia and charged with one count of felony

---

<sup>1</sup> Kelly Joiner is the Deputy Director of the Department’s Office of EMS and Trauma.

murder, two counts of aggravated assault and one count of possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime. (OSAH Form 1; Exhibit R-3).

3. According to Petitioner's arrest report, McCollum arrived at their home at around 11:40 a.m. on December 17 to pick up his belongings. The roommate and McCollum began to argue while he attempted to collect items from a shed in the backyard, and McCollum "shoved" the door of the shed into her. The roommate's son tried to intervene, at which point the McCollum began "cussing and threatening" his wife's son. During this altercation Petitioner was standing at the doorway of the house. When McCollum started towards her, she shot him once in the chest. (Exhibit R-3).
4. Petitioner does not deny that she shot and killed McCollum, but claims that she was acting in self-defense. She has not yet been indicted in Colquitt County.
5. On December 20, 2022, after learning of her arrest, the Department launched an investigation of Petitioner. On December 28, 2022, the Department informed Petitioner that her license would be suspended pending the outcome of the criminal charges against her in Colquitt County. (OSAH Form 1; Exhibit R-2; Testimony of Kelly Joiner).
6. Aside from her pending murder charges, Petitioner's criminal history consists only of a 2017 misdemeanor shoplifting charge that was dismissed. (Exhibit R-1).
7. Petitioner is currently working as a paramedic in Irwin County, Georgia. Her supervisor, Brandon Fletcher, testified that she is a "good," "dependable" paramedic. He said that there have been no complaints about her work and that he does not believe that she presents a danger to patients. (Testimony of Brandon Fletcher).

## II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

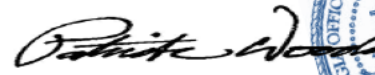
8. Because this case involves the suspension of Petitioner's paramedic license, the Department bears the burden of proof. Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 616-1-2-.07(1). The standard of proof in this case is a preponderance of the evidence. Id. at 616-1-2-.21(4).
9. The authority to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations was bestowed on the Department to "effect prevention, abatement, and correction of situations and conditions which, if not promptly checked, would militate against the health of the people of this state." O.C.G.A. § 31-2A-6(a); see also O.C.G.A. § 31-11-5. The Department has promulgated rules establishing standards governing licensure, standards of conduct, and disciplinary action for emergency medical services personnel, including paramedics. See Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 511-9-2-.01 et seq.
10. The Department "shall" revoke the license of any individual who fails to comply with the regulations of the Department. However, the Department may, at its discretion, "impose a lesser sanction where the circumstances of the violation do not merit revocation of the license, including probation on specified terms or suspension." Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 511-9-2-.19(1) and (2). See also O.C.G.A. § 31-11-57.
11. Pursuant to Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 511-9-2-.18(26) "[a] licensee shall take no action that may result in a criminal conviction on a felony charge, a crime of moral turpitude, or the crime of driving under the influence or possession of a controlled substance."
12. Shooting and killing a person is indisputably an "action that may result in a criminal conviction on a felony charge." This violation of the Department's regulations constitutes sufficient grounds to sanction Petitioner's license. The Court recognizes that depriving Petitioner of her ability to work in her chosen profession is a harsh penalty, particularly given that she may have to wait a significant period of time before there is any movement in her criminal case, and that her claim of self-defense

may very well be valid. Ultimately, however, the Department met its burden of showing that Petitioner's actions justified such a sanction.

### III. FINAL DECISION

In accordance with the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Department's decision to suspend Petitioner's paramedic license is **AFFIRMED**. Petitioner's license is hereby **SUSPENDED** pending a favorable disposition in her criminal case.

SO ORDERED, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
M. Patrick Woodard  
Administrative Law Judge

