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New Charges Filed Against Nursing Home Worker

MOUNT PLEASANT – Wednesday, May 27, 2026, the Henry County Attorneys' Office filed felony criminal charges against a licensed practical nurse, Ashley Bessine, 30, of Burlington. She is charged with four counts of prohibited acts involving controlled substances, which are Class C felonies, and one other aggravated misdemeanor, Wanton Neglect of a Resident of a Health Care Facility.

Court records show that in December 2025, Ms. Bessine was employed at the New London Specialty Care. She was charged with four felony counts of prohibited acts involving controlled substances, one count of tampering with records, and one count of dependent adult abuse. The previous county attorney, Darin Stater, had initiated the charges.

Mr. Stater subsequently resigned, effective February 9, 2026. Abbie Liechty was hired on January 12th as an Assistant County Attorney. When Mr. Stater resigned, Ms. Liechty was appointed by Darin Stater as the Deputy County Attorney, and she became the acting County Attorney until which time the Board of Supervisors could appoint an interim County Attorney or a special election could be held.

In order for the prosecution of an individual to proceed through the court system, an official charging document, called a Trial Information had to be submitted to and approved by the Court within 45 days of the defendant's initial appearance. Ms. Bessine's initial appearance was held on December 5, 2025. The Trial Information was required to be submitted to the Court and approved by a judge within 45 days of a defendant's initial appearance. If that deadline is missed, charges must be dismissed. The deadline for filing the Trial Information was, therefore, January 19, 2026. Due to inaction and carelessness, the deadline was missed and the charges were dismissed by the Court on February 21, 2026. It has

recently been reported that the charges were dismissed in May, however that is not true, as court records reflect.

The Supervisors voted on February 20th to hold a Special Election for the County Attorney position to be held on March 31st. Abbie Liechty served as the Acting County Attorney from February 9th until April 7th. Becky Wilson won the Special Election and was sworn in as County Attorney on April 7th.

County Attorney Becky Wilson's office investigated the situation by contacting the lead investigator and the nursing home, and found that there were additional charges that could be brought forward. Those charges were filed on May 27, 2026, and Ashley Bessine is ordered to appear in court on June 15 for arraignment.

Under Mr. Stater's and then Abbie Liechty's leadership, the County Attorney's office did not ensure the documents were filed and approved prior to the deadline. The file marked documents reflect that did not occur until January 21, 2026. Due to this, the case for the nursing home worker was dismissed on February 21st.

As the newly elected County Attorney, my staff and I looked into this case and were able to file additional charges on this individual. While this individual is facing disciplinary charges and action from the Iowa Board of Nursing, the County Attorney's office believes it is important that criminal charges also be pursued. This is important in not only this case, but also to let others know that the Henry County Attorney's office, under my leadership, will not tolerate these types of crimes.