

Nurse accused of stealing drugs, abusing patients faces prison term

By [Randall Clark](#)

October 03, 2009, 11:34AM

SALEM — A former nurse accused of stealing medications and abusing patients throughout the county pleaded guilty to theft and two counts of elderly endangerment in Superior Court here recently.

In a plea agreement reached with prosecutors, Devin Bonsall will receive just three years in state prison, a victory of sorts for a defense counsel weighing in against some heavy allegations.

Former nurse Devin Bonsall cut a deal with prosecutors and will likely serve three years in state prison. Bonsall, 29, of Deepwater, had originally faced 17 counts of endangering the welfare of the elderly, five counts of assault upon an institutionalized elderly person, six counts of theft, six counts of possession of a controlled dangerous substance and two counts of endangering the welfare of a child.

She admitted to a single third-degree count of stealing medicines and two fourth-degree counts of elderly endangerment before Salem County Superior Court Judge Timothy Farrell.

Her sentencing was set for Jan. 5 of next year.

William Snowden, a private attorney from Vineland who handled Bonsall's defense, said on Friday that she will spend very little time behind bars if she meets the criteria for the state's Intensive Supervision Parole.

"This disposition makes sense to my client because of the numerous amount of charges," said Snowden. "With the three flat she will be able to apply for ISP and be able to be out on Intensive Supervision Parole within three months."

Some of her mandatory tasks under the ISP program would include monthly community service, obeying a strict curfew and keeping a diary of her activities.

A former licensed practical nurse who had worked in the industry since she was 18, Bonsall was arrested in October of 2007 following an investigation by the New Jersey Office of the Ombudsman for the Institutionalized Elderly.

Officials said that while treating a terminally ill infant, Bonsall allegedly removed the child's

Oxycodone liquid and replaced it with grapefruit juice. However, no evidence of such conduct was ever recorded by her employer at the time, Bayada Nurses Home Care Specialists.

An elderly nursing home patient claimed Bonsall hit her in the head with a call box because she kept pressing the button. Other patients she allegedly pinched or slapped them, according to authorities.

Police believe beyond the abuse of nearly 20 patients since 2004, Bonsall was stealing prescription drugs such as Oxycodone, Morphine, Xanax and Percocet that was supposed to have been given to the patients to ease their suffering.

The majority of abuse cases in the indictment involved the Rainbow Nursing Home in Pittsgrove Township. Additional victims came forward from Southgate Health Care Center in Carneys Point Township and the Salem County Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center in Mannington Township.

Bonsall is accused of similar activity during brief tenures with Gloucester Manor in Washington Township, Kresson View Center in Voorhees and NOVA Care in Deptford.