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8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
9 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
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11 BRIDGET HUNTER,

12 Plaintiff,

13 vs.

14 MICHAEL J. ASTRUE, Commissioner
of Social Security,

15 Defendant.
16

CASE NO. ED CV 10-01563 RZ

MEMORANDUM OPINION
AND ORDER

17 Plaintiff Bridget Hunter makes a single argument in support of her Complaint
18 that the Social Security Commissioner wrongly denied her claim for disability benefits.
19 She contends that the Administrative Law Judge (“ALJ”) improperly determined that
20 Plaintiff’s prior work experience qualified as “past relevant work.” For the following
21 reasons, the Court affirms the Commissioner’s decision.

22 A claimant’s former occupation qualifies as “past relevant work” if it was
23 performed in the last fifteen years, for a long enough time to allow her to learn how to do
24 it, and produced enough income to qualify as “substantial gainful activity.” 20 C.F.R.
25 §§ 404.1560(b)(1), 416.960(b)(1). The Commissioner has established monthly earnings
26 thresholds for substantial gainful activity that vary by year. For the years applicable to the
27 Court’s analysis, the monthly earnings thresholds are as follows: \$500 for 1990 to June
28 1999; and \$780 for July 1999 to 2000. 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1574(b), 416.974(b).

1 In this case, the ALJ properly determined that Plaintiff's work as a "certified
2 nurse's assistant" qualified as past relevant work. In her Disability Report, Plaintiff wrote
3 that she was a "patient support associate" at a hospital from 1991 through 2000. She
4 explained that her responsibilities at this job included "housekeeping, [taking] discharged
5 patients to their vehicles, [taking] dead patients to the morgue, answer[ing] phones, [and
6 taking] patients to [the] lab for exams or . . . treatment." (AR 163.) Her earnings exceeded
7 the threshold for substantial gainful activity every year from 1991 through 2000 (*see* AR
8 163), and Plaintiff does not contest that she spent enough time performing this job to allow
9 her to learn how to do it. The vocational expert testified that this job constituted past
10 relevant work as generally described by DICTIONARY OF OCCUPATIONAL TITLES section
11 355.677-014. (AR 45-46.) The DICTIONARY OF OCCUPATIONAL TITLES describes this
12 occupation as a "Transporter, Patients" or "Escort, Patients," but the ALJ referred to it as
13 a "hospital certified nurse's assistant." Because Plaintiff performed this job within the last
14 fifteen years, for a long enough time to learn how to do it, and earned enough income from
15 it to qualify as "substantial gainful activity," the ALJ properly determined that Plaintiff's
16 experience in this occupation constituted past relevant work.¹

17 In accordance with the foregoing, the decision of the Commissioner is
18 affirmed.

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20 DATED: October 27, 2011

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23 RALPH ZAREFSKY
24 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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26 ¹ Because the ALJ properly determined that Plaintiff's experience as a certified nurse's
27 assistant qualified as past relevant work, the Court need not and does not address whether the ALJ erred
28 in determining that Plaintiff's experience as a child care monitor and home attendant also qualified as
past relevant work.