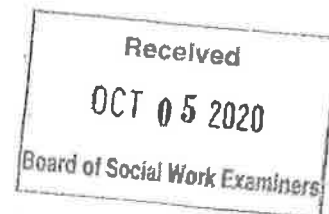


CELESTE BLAND GUARY, LCSW-C


October 9th, 2020

Date



Gerard Farrell, Board Chair
State Board of Social Work Examiners
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

RE: Surrender of Social Work License
License Number: 20155
Case Number: 2019-2707

Dear Mr. Farrell and Members of the Board:

Please be advised that I have decided to **SURRENDER** my license to practice social work in the State of Maryland, License Number: 20155, effective immediately. I understand that upon surrender of my license, I may not practice social work, with or without compensation, or otherwise engage in the practice of social work in the State of Maryland as it is defined in the Maryland Social Workers Act (the "Act"), Md. Code Ann., Health Occupations. ("Health Occ.") §§ 19-101 *et seq.*, (2014 Repl. Vol. & 2019 Supp.) and other applicable laws. In other words, as of the effective date of this Letter of Surrender, I understand that I am in the same position as an unlicensed individual in the State of Maryland.

I understand that this Letter of Surrender is a **PUBLIC DOCUMENT**, and, on the Board's, acceptance becomes a **FINAL ORDER** of the Board.

My decision to surrender my license to practice social work in the State of Maryland has been prompted by an investigation of my license by the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners (the "Board"). The results of the investigation led the Board to issue disciplinary charges against me on or about April 24, 2020, under Case Number: 2019-2707.

I have decided to surrender my license to practice social work in the State of Maryland to avoid further prosecution of the disciplinary charges now pending before the Board. I acknowledge that the Board initiated an investigation of this matter and issued disciplinary charges against me under the Act.

After its investigation the Board charged me with violating the following provisions of Health. Occ. §§ 19-311:

- (4) Commits any act of gross negligence, incompetence, or misconduct in the practice of social work;
- (5) Engages in a course of conduct that is inconsistent with generally accepted professional standards in the practice of social work;
- (6) Violates any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board[.]

The Board also charged me with violating the following provisions of COMAR 10.42.03:

.06 Standards of Practice.

A. Professional Competence. The licensee shall:

- (7) Document and maintain appropriate and accurate records of professional service, supervision, and research work[.]

I wish to make clear that I have voluntarily, knowingly, and freely chosen to submit this Letter of Surrender to avoid prosecution of the aforementioned charges under the Act. I acknowledge that if the case were to proceed to an evidentiary hearing, the State would be able to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that I violated the Act as charged. I acknowledge that for all purposes relevant to social work licensure, those investigative findings will be treated as if proven. I further acknowledge that the State can prove that I operated a private practice in Baltimore, Maryland. I provided mental health services to clients.

On or about July 9, 2019, the Respondent was indicted by the grand jury for Baltimore City, Maryland on one (1) count of Felony Medicaid Fraud, in violation of Md. Code Ann., Crim. Law §8-509. Between April 2015 and October 2018, I submitted false claims to the Maryland Medicaid program for services that she did not provide to numerous clients. I received more than eighty-one thousand and seven hundred dollars (\$81,700) for services that I did not provide. On or about September 20, 2019, I pleaded guilty to one (1) count of Felony Medicaid Fraud in violation of Md. Code Ann., Crim. Law §8-509. I was sentenced to a six (6) month suspended sentence, placed on supervised probation for five (5) years, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$81,794.04.

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I understand that by executing this Letter of Surrender I am waiving any right to contest the charges in a formal evidentiary hearing at which I would have had the right to counsel, to confront witnesses, to give testimony, to call witnesses on my own behalf and all other substantive and procedural protections provided by law, including the right to appeal.

I understand that the Board will advise the National Practitioners' Data Bank of this Letter of Surrender, and in any response to any inquiry, that I have surrendered my license in lieu of further disciplinary action under the Act. I also understand that in the event I would apply for license in any form in any other state or jurisdiction, that this Letter of Surrender and the underlying investigative documents may be released or published by the Board to the same extent as a final order that would result from disciplinary action, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., State Govt., § 10-611 *et seq.*, (2014 Repl. Vol & 2019Supp.), and that this Letter of Surrender is considered a disciplinary action by the Board.

I affirm that on or before the date of Board's acceptance of this Letter of Surrender, I will provide to Board staff my social work licenses. As a condition of petitioning for reinstatement of my Maryland License, I will submit to a mental health evaluation by a Board-assigned evaluator at my expense. I will also need to provide documentation that I have satisfied all my continuing education requirements for all subsequent renewal periods that I am not licensed by the Board. If I apply for reinstatement of my Maryland License, the Board has full discretion to grant or deny my reinstatement. If the Board denies my application, I do not have the right to a hearing or to appeal the Board's decision. If the Board does grant reinstatement, it may impose any terms and conditions the Board considers appropriate for public safety and the protection of the integrity and reputation of the profession. I understand that when applying for reinstatement, I will approach the Board in the same posture as one whose license has been revoked. I also understand that if I apply for reinstatement, I bear the burden of demonstrating my professional competence and fitness to practice social work to the satisfaction of the Board.

I acknowledge that I may not rescind this Letter of Surrender in part or in its entirety for any reason whatsoever. Finally, I wish to make clear that I have been advised of my right to be represented by the attorney of my choice throughout proceedings before the Board, including the right to counsel with an attorney prior to signing this Letter of Surrender. I understand both the nature of the Board's actions and this Letter of Surrender fully. I acknowledge that I understand and comprehend the language, meaning and terms and effect of this Letter of Surrender. I voluntarily choose to surrender my

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Maryland license to practice social work pursuant to the terms and conditions set out herein. I make this decision knowingly and voluntarily.

Very truly yours,



Celeste Bland-Guary, LCSW-C

NOTARY

STATE OF MARYLAND
CITY/COUNTY OF

BALTO. CO



I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 29 day of SEPT 2020, before me, a Notary Public of the State and City/County aforesaid, personally appeared, **CELESTE BLAND-GUARY, LCSW-C** and declared and affirmed under the penalties of perjury that signing the foregoing Letter of Surrender was her voluntary act and deed.

AS WITNESS my hand and Notarial seal.



Notary Public

My Commission expires:

11/09/2021

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ACCEPTANCE

On this ___9th___ day of October_ , 2020, I, Gerard Farrell, Board Chair, on behalf
of the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners, accept the **SURRENDER** of the
license of **CELESTE BLAND-GU ARY, LCSW-C** to practice social work in the State
of Maryland.



Gerard Farrell, Board Chair
Maryland State Board of Social Work
Examiners