

IN THE MATTER OF
IRENE CARROLL

License Number: 17821

Case Number: 2022-3186

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BEFORE THE MARYLAND
STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL
WORK EXAMINERS

**FINAL DECISION AND ORDER OF REVOCATION
OF LICENSE TO PRACTICE SOCIAL WORK**

I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Complaint

On March 11, 2022 the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) received a complaint against Irene Carroll, LCSW-C (the “Respondent”). The complaint alleged that on December 9, 2021 the Respondent entered a plea of guilty in Anne Arundel County in case C-02-CR-20-1043 to one (1) count of felony Medicaid Fraud and one (1) count of felony theft for submitting fraudulent claims totalling \$16,544.23. The complaint further alleged that the Respondent was placed on probation for three (3) years and paid restitution in the amount of \$16,544.23 at the time of the plea hearing.

The Board conducted an investigation into the complaint. On April 28, 2022 the Board received a certified copy of the conviction in case C-02-CR-20-1043. On May 6, 2022 the Respondent participated in a recorded interview with the Board’s investigator.

Charges Under the Maryland Social Workers Act

On March 18, 2023 the Board issued Charges Under the Maryland Social Workers Act (the “Charging Document”) charging the Respondent with violating several portions of the Maryland Social Workers Practice Act (the “Practice Act”) codified at Annotated Code of Maryland Health Occupations (“Md. Code Ann. H.O.”) §§ 19-101 *et seq.*

H.O. §19-311 states:

Subject to the hearing provisions of §19-312 of this subtitle, the Board may deny a license to any applicant, fine a licensee, reprimand any licensee, place any licensee on probation, or suspend or revoke a license if the applicant or licensee:

* * *

(2) Fraudulently or deceptively uses a license;

* * *

- (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;
- (7) Is convicted of or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a felony or to a crime involving moral turpitude, whether or not any appeal or other proceeding is pending to have the conviction or plea set aside;

* * *

- (11) Makes or files a false record or report in the practice of social work;

* * *

- (13) Submits a false statement to collect a fee....

The pertinent provisions of Md. Code Regs. ("COMAR"), provide the following:

COMAR 10.42.03.03 Responsibilities to Clients

A. The licensee shall:

* * *

- (2) Make the fee for service clear, maintain accurate financial records, stipulate payment schedules, and confirm arrangements for financial reimbursement from the client;

* * *

- (5) Maintain documentation in the client's record which:

* * *

- (b) Accurately reflects the services provided, including treatment plans, treatment goals, and contact notes;

COMAR 10.42.03.06. Standards of Practice.

A. Professional Competence. The licensee shall:

* * *

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

Notice of Hearing

On October 26, 2023 the Board sent a letter (the "Hearing Notice") by regular and certified mail to the Respondent placing the Respondent on notice of an evidentiary hearing scheduled for February 9, 2024. The letter advised the hearing would take place virtually and that if the Respondent had questions or concerns to contact Board staff.

On May 18, 2023 the Board issued charges under the Maryland Social Workers Act charging the Respondent with violations of the Practice Act. (State's Ex. 12, p. 108-119, Transcript p. 39) On October 26, 2023 the Board issued the Respondent a notice via certified and regular mail that an evidentiary hearing in the Respondent's disciplinary case was scheduled for February 9, 2024. (State's Ex. 13, p. 120, Transcript p. 39) The Board sent notices to the Respondent advising her of the hearing date and time. The notices were sent through the US Postal Service and certified mail. The certified letters were returned to the Board as undelivered, but the notices sent via regular mail were not returned. (Transcript p. 7) The Respondent had an address on file with the Board in order to receive correspondence from the Board. (State's Ex. 3, p. 11) The Board sent the Hearing Notice to the address the Respondent had on file with the Board. (Transcript p. 40) The Hearing Notice contained the date and time of the evidentiary hearing in the Respondent's disciplinary case. (State's Ex. 13, p. 120, Transcript p. 40) The Respondent was not present at the hearing on February 9, 2024. (Transcript p.7)

On February 9, 2024, with a quorum present, the Board conducted an evidentiary hearing. An administrative prosecutor was present on behalf of the State. The Respondent did not attend the hearing.

STATE'S EXHIBITS

- State's Exhibit 1: License Verification (p. 1 - 2)
- State's Exhibit 2: Investigative Report (p. 3 - 10)
- State's Exhibit 3: Complaint, Confidential Notice of Complaint (p.11 - 14)
- State's Exhibit 4: Correspondence to Respondent, Request for Response, April 19, 2022 (p. 15)
- State's Exhibit 5: Response Letter from Respondent, May 26, 2022 (p. 16)
- State's Exhibit 6: Correspondence to Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County Case No. C-02-20-001043 dated April 19, 2022 (p. 17)
- Indictment, State of Maryland v. Irene Carroll, Case No. C-0220-001043 (p. 18-22)

Criminal Hearing Sheet, Case No. C-02-20-001043, September 17, 2021 (p. 23)

Criminal Hearing Sheet, Sentencing Hearing Case No. C-02-20-001043,
December 9, 2021 (p. 24)

Probation/Supervision Order, Case No. C-02-20-001043, December 9, 2021 (p.
25-28)

State's Exhibit 7: Subpoena to Behavioral Health Administration dated April 19, 2022 (p. 29)

Beacon Health Options Audit (p. 30-41)

Case Summary (p. 42-45)

State's Exhibit 8: Subpoena to Maryland Department of Parole and Probation dated April 21, 2019
(p. 46)

State's Exhibit 9: Email correspondence with Department of Public Safety and Correctional
Services dated April 21 2019 and April 26, 2019 (p. 47-48)

Probation/Supervision Order, Case No. C-02-20-001043, December 9, 2021 (p.
49-52)

Criminal Hearing Sheet, Case No. C-02-20-001043, December 9, 2021 (p. 53)

Indictment, State of Maryland v. Irene Carroll, Defendant, Case No. C-0220-
001043 (p.54-57)

Email from Irene Carroll to Charlene Humphreys, Sr. Agent, Parole and
Probation with forwarded email from Office of Graduate Admission Howard
University dated February 28, 2022 (p. 58-60)

Level of Service Inventory, Revised (LSI-R) Assessment and Profile Report for
Irene Carroll, dated December 15, 2021 (p. 61-67)

Copy of BGE utility bill addressed to Irene Carroll due date December 6, 2021
(p. 68)

Copy of correspondence from Maryland Department of Transportation addressed
to Irene Carroll dated November 11, 2021 (p. 69)

State of Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Division of Parole and Probation Payment Instructions dated December 10, 2021

(p. 71)

Probation, Parole and Mandatory Release Condition dated December 13, 2021
Maryland Division of Parole and Probation Notice of Graduated Interventions
and Sanctions dated December 9, 2021 (p. 72)

State of Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Offender Intake Information dated December 9, 2021 (p. 73)

Maryland Driver's License, Irene Carroll (p. 74)

OBSCIS Collection Data, Irene Carroll, dated December 13, 2021 (p. 75)

State of Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Case
Notes, Irene Carroll (p. 76-83)

Email Correspondence with Charlene Humphreys, Sr. Agent, Parole and
Probation, April 28, 2022 (p.84)

Email Correspondence with Charlene Humphreys, Sr. Agent, Parole and
Probation, May 3, 2022 (p.85-86)

State's Exhibit 10: Transcript of Board of Social Work Examiners Interview with Irene Carroll held
on May 6, 2022 (p.87-105)

State's Exhibit 11: Email from Respondent, June 3, 2022 (p.106)

Copy of Respondent's Restitution Check payable to the State of Maryland dated
September 16, 2021 (p.107)

State's Exhibit 12: Charges Under the Maryland Social Workers Act, March 18, 2023 (p.108-119)

State's Exhibit 13: Notice of Hearing, October 26, 2023 (p.120)

RESPONDENT'S EXHIBITS

None.

STATE'S WITNESSES

Garcia Gilmore, Board Investigator

RESPONDENT'S WITNESSES

None.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board makes the following findings of fact based upon the entirety of the record:

1. The Board issued the Respondent a license to practice social work, Lic. No.: 17821, on March 21, 2012. (State's Ex. 1, pg. 1)
2. At the time of the hearing, on February 9, 2024, the Respondent's license was non-renewed (Transcript p.19)¹
3. On September 17, 2021 the Respondent entered a guilty plea to one count of Defrauding a State Health Plan and one count of Theft of Greater than \$1,500 to Under \$25,000 in case C-02-CR-20-1043. (State's Ex. 6, p. 24, Transcript p. 27)
4. The Respondent submitted false claims to the Maryland Medical Assistance Program in the amount of \$16,544.23 for services she did not provide. (State's Ex. 3, Transcript p. 23)
5. On December 9, 2021 the Respondent received a sentence of three (3) years probation. (State's Ex. p. 23, Transcript p.27-28)
6. On March 11, 2022 the Board received a complaint against Respondent. (State's Ex. 3, p. 11, Transcript p. 21-22)
7. On April 19, 2022 the Board sent the Respondent a request for response. (State's Ex. 4, p. 20, Transcript p. 24)
8. The Respondent returned a written response admitting to the theft. (State's Ex. 5, p. 16, Transcript p.24-25)
9. The Respondent participated in an interview with the Board's investigator and during the interview admitted to entering a guilty plea to one count of Defrauding a State Health Plan and one count of Theft. (State's Ex.10, p. 91, Transcript p. 38)

III. DISCUSSION

The State's Evidence

The State presented evidence that the Respondent entered a guilty plea to two separate criminal charges: one charge of Defrauding a State Health Plan, and one charge of theft greater than \$1,500 and lower than \$25,000. (State's Ex. 6, p. 24, Transcript p. 27)

The State also presented testimony and documentary evidence of the Respondent's interactions with the Board including multiple admissions from the Respondent that they did enter the guilty pleas in the criminal case. (State's Ex. 5, p. 16, Transcript p. 24-25; State's Ex.10 p. 91, Transcript p. 38)

The Respondent's Evidence

¹ The Respondent's license to practice social work expired on October 31, 2022. The Respondent's license was active between 2014 and 2018.

None.

The Respondent's Conduct Constituted Violations of the Practice Act

The Board charged the Respondent with multiple violations of the Practice Act. The Respondent's felony convictions for fraud and theft are prima facie evidence that she used her license in a deceptive manner and entered a guilty plea to a felony. (State's Ex. 6, p. 24)

Therefore, the Board finds that the Respondent is in violation of the following portions of H.O. §19-311:

(2) Fraudulently or deceptively uses a license;

...

(7) Is convicted of or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a felony or to a crime involving moral turpitude...

In the course of committing the fraud and theft, the Respondent created false records in order to collect fees for services never provided. (State's Ex. 6, p. 18-22)

Therefore, the Board finds that the Respondent is in violation of the following portions of H.O. §19-311:

(11) Makes or files a false record or report in the practice of social work;

...

(13) Submits a false statement to collect a fee

Although the Board charged the Respondent with additional counts of violating the Practice Act, it does not need to reach the question of whether the Respondent violated the additional provisions of the Practice Act or any portions of the Board's regulations.

III. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes, as a matter of law, that the Respondent violated the following portions of Md. Code Ann., H.O. §19-311:

Subject to the hearing provisions of §19-312 of this subtitle, the Board may deny a license to any applicant, fine a licensee, reprimand any licensee, place any licensee on probation, or suspend or revoke a license if the applicant or licensee:

(2) Fraudulently or deceptively uses a license;

- (7) Is convicted of or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a felony or to a crime involving moral turpitude, whether or not any appeal or other proceeding is pending to have the conviction or plea set aside;
- (11) Makes or files a false record or report in the practice of social work;
- (13) Submits a false statement to collect a fee....

The Board will dismiss the balance of charges.

Determination of Appropriate Sanction

The Board must rely on its sanctioning guidelines located in COMAR 10.42.09.04 to craft an appropriate penalty in disciplinary cases.

The guidelines for fraudulent or deceptive use of a license range from active suspension for 90 days to revocation.

The guidelines for entering a guilty plea to a felony range from probation to revocation.

The guidelines for filing a false report and submitting a false statement to collect a fee range from probation to revocation.

The Board must also take into account any aggravating or mitigating factors in the Respondent's case. (see COMAR 10.42.09.05)

The Board finds that mitigating factors exist including the Respondent's full and voluntary admission of misconduct in their interactions with the Board's investigator, and the Respondent paying restitution. (State's Ex.5; State's Ex. 10; State's Ex. 11, p. 107)

The Board also finds that aggravating factors are also present including the motivation for financial gain, vulnerability of the clients, pattern of detrimental conduct, deliberate nature of the conduct and the fact the violation was committed under the guise of treatment. (State's Ex. 3, p. 12; Transcript p.30-37)

Finally, the Board has considered its obligation to protect the public and ensure that licensees do not utilize their license to commit fraud.

In doing so, the Board finds that revocation is an appropriate sanction under these circumstances. The Respondent is not a suitable candidate for suspension under the sanctioning guidelines. The Respondent committed a blatant act of misconduct, and although she has accepted responsibility for the misconduct by entering a guilty plea in criminal court, it does not change the seriousness of the violation. Accordingly, the Board will revoke the Respondent's license.

IV. ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is hereby:

ORDERED that the Respondent's license to practice social work under license 17821 is hereby **REVOKED**; and it is further

ORDERED that the Board shall not consider an application for reinstatement of the Respondent's license for a minimum period of **FIVE (5)** years from the effective date of this order; and it is further

ORDERED that this Order is a **PUBLIC RECORD** under Md. Code Ann., General Provisions Article §§ 4-101 et seq. (2019).

07/31/2026

Karen Richards, LCSW-C

Date

Executive Director
Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners

07/31/2026

Jammi Wilson, LCSW-C

Date

Board Chair
Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Pursuant to Maryland Annotated Code, Health Occupations §19-311, the Respondent may take a direct judicial appeal as provided in the Administrative Procedure Act. Any petition for judicial review shall be filed within thirty (30) days from the date of mailing of this Final Order.

The date of the cover letter accompanying this Order is the date the decision was mailed. Any petition for judicial review shall be made as provided for in the Administrative Procedure Act, Md. Code Ann., State Gov't §10-222 and Maryland Rule 7-203(a)(2).

If the Respondent files a petition for judicial review the Board is a party and should be served with the court's process at the following address:

**Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners
Karen Richards, Executive Director
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215**

Notice should also be sent to the Board's counsel at the following address:

**Joshua Frazer
Assistant Attorney General
Maryland Department of Health
300 West Preston Street, Suite 302
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**