

<p>IN THE MATTER OF</p> <p>FELICITE A. NEAL, LCSW-C</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Respondent</p> <p>License Number: 12321</p>	<p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p>	<p>BEFORE THE MARYLAND</p> <p>STATE BOARD OF</p> <p>SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS</p> <p>Case Number: 2018-2561</p>
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FINAL ORDER

On the 13th day of September, 2019, the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) notified **FELICITE A. NEAL, LCSW-C** (Licensed Certified Social Worker – Clinical) (the “Respondent”), License Number 12321, of its intent to revoke her license to practice social work in the State of Maryland under the Maryland Social Workers Act (the “Act”), Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. (“Health Occ.”) §§ 19-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol. and 2018 Supp.).

Specifically, the Board based its action on the Respondent’s violation of the following provisions of the Act and COMAR:

Health Occ. § 19-311. Denials, reprimands, suspensions, and revocations - Grounds.

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:

- (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; [and]
- (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[.]

COMAR 10.42.03.03 – Responsibilities to Clients.

B. The licensee may not:

- (1) Participate or condone dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

In its Notice, the Board informed the Respondent that she had the opportunity to request a hearing before the Board by submitting a request in writing to the Board's Executive Director within thirty days of service of the Notice. More than thirty days have elapsed since the service of the Notice on the Respondent, and the Respondent has not requested a hearing.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board makes the following findings of fact:

I. BACKGROUND

1. At all times relevant, the Respondent was licensed to practice clinical social work in the State of Maryland. The Respondent was initially licensed to practice clinical social work in Maryland on or about March 29, 2004. The Respondent's license is current until October 31, 2020.

2. At all times relevant, the Respondent an operator and provider of private mental health services in Prince George's County, Maryland. Her clients included individuals, who were covered under Medicaid.

3. On or about October 19, 2018, the Board opened an investigation of the Respondent after receiving an email from the Maryland Office of the Inspector General ("OIG") for the Department of Health informing the Board that the Respondent was convicted and sentenced the previous month for Medicaid Fraud.

II. BOARD INVESTIGATION

4. In the course of its investigation, the Board obtained court record in the Respondent's criminal case from the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland.

5. The Respondent's court record showed that on or about August 1, 2017, a Prince George's County grand jury issued a two-count indictment against the Respondent for: Felony Medicaid Fraud, in violation of Md. Code Ann., Crim. Law § 8-509; Felony Theft Scheme of more \$10,000 but less than \$100,000, in violation of Crim. Law § 7-104.

6. On or about September 14, 2018, the Respondent appeared in the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland, in Case Number CT171053X, captioned *State of Maryland v. Felicite Neal*, and pleaded guilty to one count of Felony Medicaid Fraud, in violation of Crim. Law § 8-509.

7. The written plea agreement accompanying the Respondent's plea of guilty included a Statement of Facts, which stated that with respect to three clients for whom the

Respondent billed Medicaid in amounts of \$24,756.75, \$4,464.13 and \$1,136.57 respectively for mental health services, the Respondent failed to render the mental health services she claimed was provided to these clients.

8. Subsequent to the Respondent's plea of guilty to Felony Medicaid Fraud, the circuit court judge sentenced the Respondent to five years of incarceration, all of which were suspended, followed by five years of supervised probation, restitution in the amount of \$91,072.35 and a prohibition from employment with any federally funded medical program.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent's plea of guilty to and conviction for Felony Medicaid Fraud, in violation of Crim. Law § 8-509, in the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Case Number CT171053X, on or about September 14, 2018, constitute: committing an act of gross negligence, incompetence, or misconduct in the practice of social work, in violation of Health Occ. § 19-311(4); engaging in a course of conduct that is inconsistent with generally accepted professional standards in the practice of social work, in violation of § 19-311(5); violating any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board, *to wit*, COMAR 10.42.03.03B(1), in violation of § 19-311(6); and pleading guilty to and being convicted of a felony or to a crime involving moral turpitude, in violation of § 19-311(7).

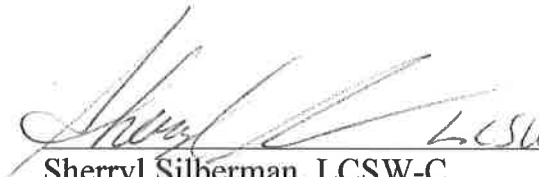
ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board considering this case:

ORDERED that the Respondent Felicite A. Neal, LCSW-C's license to practice social work in the State of Maryland under License Number 12321 be and hereby is **REVOKED**; and it is further

ORDERED that this Order is a **PUBLIC DOCUMENT** pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. §§ 4-101 *et seq.* (2014).

9/13/19
Date


Sherryl Silberman, LCSW-C
Board Chair
Maryland State Board of Social Work
Examiners

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

Pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 19-313(b) (2014 Repl. Vol.), you have a right to take a direct judicial appeal. A Petition for Judicial Review must be filed within thirty (30) days of service of this Order and shall be made as provided for judicial review of a final decision in the Md. Code Ann., State Gov't §§ 10-201 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol.) and Title 7, Chapter 200 of the Maryland Rules.