

IN THE MATTER OF * BEFORE THE MARYLAND
STACY PLEAZE, LCSW-C * STATE BOARD OF
RESPONDENT * SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS
License Number: 13802 * Case Number: 2019-2626

* * * * *

FINAL ORDER

On the 11th day of December, 2020, the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) notified **STACY PLEAZE, LCSW-C** (the “Respondent”), License Number 13802, 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. §§ 19-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol. and 2019 Supp.).

Specifically, the Board based its action on the Respondent’s violation of the following provisions of the Act under Health Occ. § 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:

- (1) Obtained or attempted to obtain a license for the applicant or licensee or for another through fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation;
- (4) Commits any act of gross negligence, incompetence, or misconduct 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;
- (9) Is disciplined by a licensing or disciplinary authority of any state, country, or branch of the armed services,

or the Veterans' Administration for an act that would be grounds for disciplinary action under this section; *to wit,*

Health Occ. § 19-311:

- (1) Obtained or attempted to obtain a license for the applicant or licensee or for another through fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation;
- (19) Fails to comply with the requirements of any order entered by the Board as a result of any disciplinary matter with the Board, including payment of costs as required by § 19-312 of this subtitle;
- (11) Makes or files a false report or record in the practice of social work[.]

The Board also based its action on the Respondent's violation of the following provision of the Board's regulations under Md. Code Regs. ("COMAR") 10.42.03:

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 this 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:

1. At all times relevant hereto, 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 August 30, 2012, under license number 13802. The Respondent's license expires on October 31, 2020.

2. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent was also licensed to practice social work in the State of North Carolina by the North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board (the "North Carolina Board"). The Respondent was initially licensed to practice social work in North Carolina on or about September 20, 2012.

Complaint

3. In or around 2019, the Board received notice that the Respondent was disciplined by the North Carolina Board.

4. Based on the notification, the Board began an investigation of the Respondent.

Investigation

5. In furtherance of its investigation, the Board obtained prior disciplinary orders from the North Carolina Board.

6. Records from the North Carolina Board revealed that on or about May 16, 2014, the North Carolina Board issued a Final Agency Decision (the "2014 Final Agency Decision") in which it censured the Respondent's license and ordered the Respondent to

submit the names of three proposed supervisors within thirty days of the effective date of the order and complete twenty-six supervisory sessions within one year.¹ The 2014 Final Agency Decision found that the Respondent failed to disclose on her initial application² for a North Carolina social work license that on January 31, 2003, the Office of Administrative Hearings found that the Respondent, who was working as a mental health technician, abused her patient at an “adolescent mental health treatment facility.”³

7. Subsequently, on or about December 5, 2014, the Respondent entered into a Consent Order (the “2014 Consent Order”) with the North Carolina Board where the Respondent stipulated that she failed to comply with the conditions of the 2014 Final Agency Decision. As part of the 2014 Consent Order, the Respondent’s North Carolina license was censured, she was required to submit a new application if she sought recertification, and if she was recertified, the license would be placed on probation until the Respondent completed the conditions of the 2014 Final Agency Decision. The 2014 Consent Order further provided that if, while on probation, the Respondent failed to comply with the terms of the 2014 Final Agency Decision, then her license would be revoked.

¹ The 2014 Final Agency Decision also ordered the Respondent not to provide clinical social work supervision to others until the requirements of the 2014 Final Agency Decision had been met and the Respondent received approval from the North Carolina Board to begin providing clinical social work supervision.

² The initial application was submitted on or about September 19, 2012.

³ The 2014 Final Agency Decision further found that the Respondent testified that she failed to disclose the prior finding of abuse because “she was extremely busy when she filled out the application.”

8. Finally, on or about February 1, 2019, the North Carolina Board issued a Final Agency Decision (the “2019 Final Agency Decision”) in which it revoked the Respondent’s North Carolina social work license for a minimum of five years. The 2019 Final Agency Decision concluded as a matter of law that the Respondent engaged in the practice of social work without completing the required supervision provisions, violated the terms of the 2014 Final Agency Decision, and violated the terms of the 2014 Consent Order.

9. The 2019 Final Agency Decision included the following Findings of Fact:

- i. On October 25, 2016, the Respondent contacted the North Carolina Board regarding her ability to reapply for licensure and satisfying the terms of the May 2014 Final Agency Decision.
- ii. The North Carolina Board received the Respondent’s application for reinstatement of her license on December 15, 2016.
- iii. On January 27, 2017, the North Carolina Board reinstated the “Respondent’s license under [p]robation and in accordance with the mandates of the Consent Order effective December 5, 2014, and the May 16, 2014 Final Agency Decision.”
- iv. After the Respondent’s license was reinstated on January 27, 2017, the North Carolina Board “received no further communication from the Respondent regarding compliance with the December 5, 2014 Consent Order until June 30, 2018, at which time the Board received the Respondent’s application for LCSW licensure renewal.”

- v. The North Carolina Board received written correspondence from the Respondent on September 11, 2018, which included the Respondent's website. Upon review of the Respondent's website, "it appeared to the Board that the Respondent was offering clinical services in North Carolina and Maryland, with a South Carolina location coming soon."
- vi. Practice in North Carolina requires North Carolina Board approved supervision "prior to engaging in clinical practice, as mandated by the 2014 Orders." According to the Respondent's website, she was providing multiple forms of clinical practice in violation of the 2014 Orders.
- vii. On September 12, 2018, the North Carolina Board's Subcommittee "determined that Respondent had demonstrated repeated failure to comply with Board Orders and resolved to take action . . . pursuant to the 2014 Consent Order which reads, 'if, while on probation, Respondent fails to comply with the terms of the Final Agency Decision, Respondent's license shall be revoked.'"

2016 Renewal Application

10. As part of the Board's investigation, the Board reviewed the Respondent's 2016 renewal application (the "2016 Renewal Application"), which she submitted on or about October 31, 2016. Under the Character and Fitness section, the 2016 Renewal Application required the Respondent to answer the following:

Within the last two years, has any State Licensing or Disciplinary Board, or a comparable body in the Armed Services denied your application for licensure, reinstatement, renewal, or taken any action against your license, including but not limited to reprimand, suspension, or revocation?

11. In response, the Respondent answered "No."⁴

12. During the two-year period preceding the 2016 Renewal Application the North Carolina Board took action against the Respondent's North Carolina license pursuant to the 2014 Consent Order.⁵

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent's actions, including being disciplined by the North Carolina Board at least three times for obtaining her North Carolina social work license by fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation, as well as, for failing to comply with the North Carolina Board's 2014 Final Agency Decision and 2014 Consent Order, which ultimately resulted in her North Carolina social work license being revoked in 2019, constitute: committing any act of gross negligence, incompetence, or misconduct in the practice of social work in violation

⁴ Notably, the Respondent also failed to disclose on her 2018 Renewal Application that her North Carolina license had been reinstated and placed on probation on January 27, 2017. *See supra* ¶ (8)(iii).

⁵ *See supra* ¶ 7.

of Health Occ. § 19-311(4); violating any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board, *i.e.* COMAR 10.42.03.03B(1), in violation of § 19-311(6); and being disciplined by a licensing or disciplinary authority of any state, country . . . for an act that would be grounds for disciplinary action under this section, *i.e.* § 19-311(1) and (19), in violation of § 19-311(9).

The Board further concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent's actions, including the Respondent's failure to disclose in her 2016 Renewal Application that her North Carolina license had been disciplined constitutes: obtaining or attempting to obtain a license for the applicant or licensee or for another through fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in violation of Health Occ. § 19-311(1); committing any act of gross negligence, incompetence, or misconduct in the practice of social work in violation of § 19-311(4); violating any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board, *i.e.* COMAR 10.42.03.03B(1), in violation of § 19-311(6); and making or filing a false report or record in the practice of social work in violation of § 19-311(11).

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 Stacy Pleaze's, LCSW-C's license to practice social work in the State of Maryland under License Number 13802 be and hereby is **REVOKED**; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent is prohibited from practicing social work in the State of Maryland; and it is further

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

12/11/2020



Date

Gerard Farrell,
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. and 2019 Supp.), 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 2019 Supp.) and Title 7, Chapter 200 of the Maryland Rules.