

IN THE MATTER OF	*	BEFORE THE
AHMUN WILLIAMS, LGSW	*	MARYLAND STATE BOARD
Respondent	*	OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS
License Number 14846	*	Case Number 2013-1853

* * * * *

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

On September 27, 2016, the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners (“the Board”) issued Charges under the Maryland Social Work Practice Act (the “charges”) against Mr. Ahmun Williams (“Respondent”). The charges alleged that Respondent committed acts of misconduct in the practice of social work, violating regulations governing the practice of social work and violating regulations in the Board’s Code of Ethics. *See* Health Occ. (“H.O”) § 19-311(4) and (6), and COMAR 10.42.03.04A and B.

Respondent requested an evidentiary hearing on the charges. The Board delegated to the Office of Administrative Hearings (“OAH”) the case for an evidentiary hearing and a proposed decision. OAH held the evidentiary hearing before an administrative law judge (“ALJ”) on March 27, 2017.

On May 25, 2017, the ALJ issued a proposed decision (“P.D.”). The ALJ recommended that the charges under the Maryland Social Work Practice Act be upheld and that the Respondent’s license to practice clinical social work be reprimanded, placed on two years of probation during which the Respondent must complete a one-to-one ethics tutorial, produce quarterly reports from his employer during his period of probation regarding his attendance, performance and other related professional issues and pay a \$2,000 fine. Respondent filed exceptions.

On July 14, 2017, a hearing on the Respondent's exceptions was held before the full Board.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Unless otherwise specifically noted in this decision, the Board adopts the findings of fact and discussion set forth in the ALJ's Proposed Decision (pages 3-7), which are incorporated by reference into this decision. The ALJ's proposed decision is attached as **Exhibit 1**. The findings of fact were proven by the preponderance of the evidence.

Summary of Facts

Respondent was employed as a Licensed Graduate Social Worker ("LGSW") at the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Adult Protection Services ("APS"), Guardianship Unit ("the Unit"). This Unit served some of the most vulnerable clients in the APS, including disabled and homeless individuals. Employees of the Unit reported to the court annually on the status of each client's guardianship status. Employees of the Unit were obligated to inform the court within 45 days if a client under guardianship passed away. The Unit, supervised by Supervisor A¹, employed eight social workers, including the Respondent, who directly oversaw 190 clients. The duties of these social workers, including the Respondent, included visiting each client on a monthly basis, authoring monthly reports regarding their client visits. Due to Supervisor A's lack of computer proficiency, the Unit's social workers were required to submit written monthly reports on forms to the work mailbox. Supervisor A would combine the information submitted on those forms to create a master report and submit the master report to her supervisor. Each guardianship was presented twice a year to the Adult Public Guardianship Review Board ("APGRB") and each case manager was required to submit an Annual Guardianship report to the APGRB. Case managers and supervisors were required to attend the

¹ For confidentiality purposes, the names of individuals are not disclosed in this document.

APGRB meetings in order to give the members an update on each client and answer questions of the Board members. The APGRB would render a decision based on the information received from each case manager and the APGRB report would then be forwarded to the Circuit Court for Baltimore City.

On or about April 26, 2013, the Board received a complaint from the Unit alleging that the Respondent falsified work-related documents. The Board initiated an investigation and found that the Unit reviewed the Respondent's cases and determined that in some instances reports were missing or incomplete. In attempting to complete the missing reports, the Unit staff determined that in one instance, the Respondent continued to document monthly visits for J.B., a patient who had passed away. The Respondent was the case manager for J.B., a disabled male, who resided in an assisted living facility and died on June 28, 2011.

J.B., a long-standing client of the Unit, was subject to guardianship in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. Shortly after Respondent began working at the Unit in May 2011, J.B. was transferred to his care from another social worker. The Case Manager Monthly Review of Activities submitted by the Respondent regarding monthly home visits for J.B. on August 9, 2011 and September 9, 2011 state that visits were made to J.B. by the Respondent. The dates in the same Case Manager Monthly Review of Activities state that for November 7, 2011, December 7, 2011, January 13, 2012, February 14, 2012 and March 14, 2012 visits were made to J.B. by the Respondent and that J.B. was "stable" with "no significant issues or concerns at this time." The Respondent attended the APGRB meeting on November 15, 2011 to present J.B.'s case.

Respondent prepared an annual report on J.B. for presentation at the November 15, 2011 meeting. The report prepared by Respondent addressed the Unit's supervision of J.B. from October 2010 through October 2011 and stated, "[J.B.] attends Paradise Medical Adult Day

Care...six days per week and has a positive attitude. He is compliant with his medications. [J.B.] gets along with his roommate, but his hygiene is still inadequate; he needs constant prompts to bathe appropriately. [J.B.] continues to smoke and drink occasionally and refuses Alcoholics Anonymous treatment.” The report recommends that J.B.’s guardianship should be continued.

J.B. was not listed on the Respondent’s April 2012 and May 2012 Case Manager Monthly Review of Activities. However, the Respondent’s Case Manager Report did not reflect any case transfers, case closures or deceased clients in March or April 2012.

Furthermore, an Annual Guardianship Report for the Circuit Court of Baltimore City for J.B., dated November 8, 2011 documents four dates of contact with J.B. (July 7, 2011, August 9, 2011, September 9, 2011 and October 6, 2011) all of which were after J.B.’s date of death.

On or about February 13, 2016, the Board’s investigator interviewed the Respondent under oath. When the Respondent was presented with the sign-in sheet for the November 15, 2011 APGRB meeting, he acknowledged that he printed his name on the sign-in sheet and was present at the meeting. The Respondent, however, stated that he did not have any recollection of J.B., of visiting J.B., or of any details about the facility where J.B. was living prior to his death.

DISCUSSION

Respondent filed exceptions to the ALJ’s proposed decision on July 8, 2017. The Board held an exceptions hearing on July 14, 2017. The Board has considered Respondent’s exceptions and find them to be without merit.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes that the Respondent violated Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 19-311(4), (5), (6) and (11):

- (4) Commits any acts 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]
- (11) Violates any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board[.]

SANCTION

The actions of the Respondent were deliberate, show poor judgment and violate generally accepted standards of the practice of social work. Respondent's abuse of the system by falsifying documents demonstrated a disregard for the client and the social work profession, in general. In addition, the Respondent's lack of insight into his misconduct is troubling. Thus, the Board finds that the Respondent shall be placed on two years of probation. In addition, given the Respondent's lack of experience and the seriousness of Respondent's violations, the Board finds that the Respondent shall be required to attend a one-on-one ethics tutorial, be provided with supervision while practicing social work with quarterly reports submitted to the Board throughout his two-year probationary period. As the ALJ stated, this will "benefit the Respondent, as well as the profession in general. Additional ethics training, as well as enhanced supervision, should ultimately assist the Respondent in the pursuit of his career."

ORDER

It is, on the affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum of the Board, hereby

ORDERED that the Respondent's license to practice as a licensed graduate social worker in the State of Maryland, license number 14846, is hereby placed on **PROBATION** for two years; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall attend a one-on-one ethics tutorial to be completed within the two-year probationary period; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall obtain supervision while practicing social work during the two-year probationary period with the supervisor providing quarterly reports throughout the two year probationary period; and it is further

ORDERED that this is a public document.

3/9/2018
Date



Denise Capaci, LCSW-C, Chair
Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Any person aggrieved by a final decision of the Board under Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. §§ 19-313 may take a direct judicial appeal within thirty (30) days as provided by Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 17-512, Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-222, and Title 7, Chapter 200 of the Maryland Rules, including Md. Rule 7-203 ("Time for Filing Action").