

Claire Winik, LCSW-C

Date: 6/6/23

Sondra G. Petty, LCSW-C
Board Chair
State Board of Social Work Examiners
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

RE: Surrender of Social Work License
License Number: 17505
Case Numbers: 2021-3013

Dear Ms. Petty 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: 17505 effective immediately. I understand that upon surrender of my license, I may not represent myself to the public by title, abbreviation, sign, card, or other representation that I am a licensed social worker in the State of Maryland. Moreover, I may not engage in the practice of social work, in any capacity, as defined in the Maryland Social Workers Act (the "Act"), Md. Code Ann., Health Occupations. ("Health Occ.") §§ 19-101 *et seq.*, (2021 Repl. Vol.) 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 March 29, 2023, under Case Numbers: 2021-3013.

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:

Health. Occ. § 19-311:

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- (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; [and]**
- (6) **Violates any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board[.]**

The pertinent provisions of COMAR, the code of ethics provide the following:

Md. Code Regs. ("COMAR") 10.42.03:

.05 Relationships.

- D. The licensee may not engage in sexual misconduct with either current or former clients.**

I acknowledge that the Board issued Charges Under the Maryland Social Workers Act (the "Charging Document") based on my conduct as a licensed certified social worker. I also acknowledge that the Board's investigation revealed the following information as alleged in the Charging Document:

- a. From 20 October 2016 until 19 December 2016 the Respondent treated the Client on eight separate counseling sessions. Insurance records, which were obtained without the consent of the Respondent or the Client, document that the Respondent was reimbursed for these counseling sessions.
- b. The client sought counseling with the Respondent to rule out anxiety and stated the Respondent, "helped me therapeutically for just under two months."
- c. The Respondent confirmed the Client "contacted me about therapy to potentially rule out an anxiety diagnosis relating to a medical condition that was unexplained and not being cured or fixed."
- d. The Respondent stated, "I saw her a total of eight times. They were very health-based sessions. We went through her entire health history..."
- e. Approximately two weeks after the counseling relationship was terminated, the Client reached out to the Respondent about meeting socially. The Respondent said no.

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- f. The Respondent informed the Client that professional consultation was needed and after consulting a colleague, the Respondent agreed to meet and subsequently developed a friendship with the Client.
- g. In July 2017 the friendship shifted into a romantic relationship.
- f. The Respondent and Client married on 27 April 2019.
- h. The Respondent and Client had a child together on 25 March 2020.
- i. The Respondent and Client remain married.

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 for all purposes relevant to my licensure, the Board's investigative findings will be treated as if proven.

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 including the Charging Document 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., § 10611 et seq., (2021 Repl. Vol.), and that this Letter of Surrender is considered a disciplinary action by the Board.

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 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. If I apply for reinstatement of my Maryland social work license, the Board has full discretion to grant or deny my reinstatement. 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. If the Board denies my application for reinstatement of my license, I do not have the right to a hearing or to appeal the Board's decision.

I understand 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

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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 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,



Claire K. Winik, LCSW-C

NOTARY

STATE OF MARYLAND

COUNTY OF Washington

I hereby certify that on this 10th day of June, 2023, before me, a Notary Public of the State of Maryland and County aforesaid, personally appeared, **CLAIRE WINIK, LCSW-C**, License Number: 17505 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

SAMANTHA KAYE ALLISON
Notary Public
Washington County, Maryland
My Commission Expires 04/22/2027

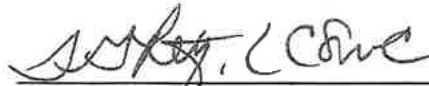
My commission expires: _____



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ACCEPTANCE

On this 9 day of June, 2023, I, Sondra Petty, LCSW-C, Board Chair, on behalf of the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners, accept the SURRENDER of the license of **Claire Winik** to practice social work in the State of Maryland.



Sondra Petty, LCSW-C
Board Chair
Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners