



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: Ronald M. Sterling, MD
Master Case No.: M2019-998
Document: Summary Action Order

Regarding your request for information about the above-named practitioner; attached is a true and correct copy of the document on file with the State of Washington, Department of Health, Adjudicative Clerk Office. These records are considered Certified by the Department of Health.

Certain information may have been withheld pursuant to Washington state laws. While those laws require that most records be disclosed on request, they also state that certain information should not be disclosed.

The following information has been withheld: **NONE**

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the information that was withheld, please contact:

Customer Service Center
P.O. Box 47865
Olympia, WA 98504-7865
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You may appeal the decision to withhold any information by writing to the Privacy Officer, Department of Health, P.O. Box 47890, Olympia, WA 98504-7890.

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
WASHINGTON MEDICAL COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the License to Practice
as a Physician and Surgeon of:

RONALD M. STERLING, MD
License No. MD.MD.00038889

Respondent.

Master Case No. M2019-998

**EX PARTE ORDER OF SUMMARY
RESTRICTION**

PRESIDING OFFICER: Jessica L. Blye, Health Law Judge

COMMISSION PANEL: John Maldon, Public Member, Chair
Clair Trescott, MD
Theresa Schimmels, PA-C

This matter came before the Washington Medical Commission (Commission) on May 6, 2020, on an Ex Parte Motion for Summary Action (Ex Parte Motion) brought by the Office of the Attorney General. The Commission issued a Statement of Charges alleging Respondent violated RCW 18.130.180(1), (9), (13), and (24). Additionally, the Commission alleged Respondent violated RCW 18.130.180(7), based on WAC 246-919-630. After reviewing the Statement of Charges, Ex Parte Motion, and supporting evidence, the Commission grants the Ex Parte Motion. Respondent's license to practice as a physician and surgeon is RESTRICTED pending further action.

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1.1 RONALD M. STERLING (Respondent), is a physician and surgeon licensed by the state of Washington at all times applicable to this matter.

1.2 The Commission issued a Statement of Charges alleging Respondent violated RCW 18.130.180(1), (9), (13), and (24). Additionally, the Commission alleged Respondent violated RCW 18.130.180(7), based on WAC 246-919-630. The Statement of Charges was accompanied by all other documents required by WAC 246-11-250.

1.3 As set forth in the allegations in the Statement of Charges, as well as the Motion, Respondent provided psychiatric treatment to Patient A from approximately March 2014 until November 2018. Patient A sought treatment from Respondent for ADHD.

1.4 Between approximately September 2014 and October 2018, Respondent and Patient A exchanged numerous personal emails. Respondent made multiple inappropriate comments, including comments of a sexual nature. Respondent also solicited dates with Patient A on various occasions, including inviting her to his home during evening and late evening hours. In addition, Respondent shared his sexual fantasies and preferences with Patient A.

1.5 After beginning treatment with the Respondent in March 2014, between 2014 and 2017, Respondent and Patient A engaged in kissing, oral sex, and sexual intercourse on multiple occasions.

1.6 In chart notes dated September 15, 2017, and August 6, 2018, Respondent included false information in Patient A's record. Respondent claimed Patient A extorted money from him in exchange for her concealing accusations of sexual misconduct. Respondent documented in Patient A's record his denial of an inappropriate relationship and also his own health conditions, which he claimed affected the viability of him having a sex life; however, the email exchanges between Respondent and Patient A demonstrate they had an inappropriate sexual relationship.

1.7 Respondent is currently subject to a Stipulation to Informal Disposition (STID) with the Commission (M2013-1114) in which he is alleged to have engaged in boundary crossings with a patient by performing paid web services for the patient and sold the patient's art for a commission. As part of the STID, Respondent agreed to obey

all laws and rules governing the practice of the profession in Washington. Respondent's behavior with Patient A has violated the current STID.

1.8 The above allegations, supported by the Declaration of Health Care Investigator in Support of Motion for Summary Action together with the attached exhibits, justify the determination of immediate danger in this case and a decision to immediately restrict the credential until a hearing on the matter is held.

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

2.1 The Commission has jurisdiction over Respondent's credential to practice as a physician and surgeon. RCW 18.130.040.

2.2 The Commission has authority to take emergency adjudicative action to address an immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare. RCW 34.05.422(4); RCW 34.05.479; RCW 18.130.050(8); and WAC 246-11-300.

2.3 The Findings of Fact establish the existence of an immediate danger to the public health and safety if Respondent has an unrestricted credential. The Findings of Fact establish that the requested summary action is necessary and adequately addresses the danger to the public health and safety.

III. ORDER

3.1 Based on the Findings of Fact and the Conclusions of Law, it is ORDERED that Respondent's license to practice as a physician and surgeon is SUMMARILY RESTRICTED pending further disciplinary proceedings by the Commission in the following manner:

Respondent is prohibited from treating female patients.

3.2 It is HEREBY ORDERED that a protective order in this case is GRANTED. RCW 34.05.446(1) and WAC 246-11-400. This Protective Order prohibits the release of

health care information outside of these proceedings. Unless required by law, anyone involved in these proceedings must keep confidential and not disclose health care information obtained through these proceedings. Health care information includes information in any form "that identifies or can readily be associated with the identity of a patient and directly relates to the patient's health care." RCW 70.02.010(16). The parties may share the information with their attorney, if any.

DATED this 8th day of May, 2020.



JOHN MALDON
Panel Chair

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