



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: Ronald M. Sterling, MD  
Master Case No.: M2019-998  
Document: Agreed 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  
Phone: (360) 236-4700  
Fax: (360) 586-2171

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  
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.

**No. M2019-998**

**STIPULATED FINDINGS OF FACT,  
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND  
AGREED ORDER**

The Washington Medical Commission (Commission), through Ariele Page Landstrom, Commission Staff Attorney, and Respondent, represented by counsel, if any, stipulate and agree to the following.

**1. PROCEDURAL STIPULATIONS**

1.1 On May 12, 2020, the Commission issued a Statement of Charges against Respondent alleging a violation of RCW 18.130.180(1), (9), (13), and (24), and RCW 18.130.180(7), based on WAC 246-919-630.

1.2 The Commission is prepared to proceed to a hearing on the allegations in the Statement of Charges.

1.3 Respondent has the right to defend against the allegations in the Statement of Charges by presenting evidence at a hearing.

1.4 The Commission has the authority to impose sanctions pursuant to RCW 18.130.160 if the allegations are proven at a hearing.

1.5 The parties agree to resolve this matter by means of this Stipulated Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Agreed Order (Agreed Order).

1.6 Respondent waives the opportunity for a hearing on the Statement of Charges if the Commission accepts this Agreed Order.

1.7 This Agreed Order is not binding unless it is accepted and signed by the Commission.

1.8 If the Commission accepts this Agreed Order, it will be reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank (45 CFR Part 60), the Federation of State Medical Boards' Physician Data Center, and elsewhere as required by law.

1.9 This Agreed Order is a public document. It will be placed on the Department of Health's website, disseminated via the Commission's electronic mailing list, and

disseminated according to the Uniform Disciplinary Act (Chapter 18.130 RCW). It may be disclosed to the public upon request pursuant to the Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW). It will remain part of Respondent's file according to the state's records retention law and cannot be expunged.

1.10 If the Commission rejects this Agreed Order, Respondent waives any objection to the participation at hearing of any Commission members who heard the Agreed Order presentation.

## **2. FINDINGS OF FACT**

Respondent and the Commission stipulate to the following findings of fact:

2.1 On July 21, 2000, the state of Washington issued Respondent a license to practice as a physician and surgeon. Respondent's license is subject to a SUMMARY RESTRICTION; Respondent is prohibited from treating female patients. Respondent is not board certified, but self-designates a specialty in geriatric psychiatry.

2.2 From March 29, 2014, until November 19, 2018, Respondent provided psychiatric treatment for Patient A.

2.3 During the time Respondent was Patient A's physician, Respondent engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Patient A. The relationship included sexual contact and intercourse.

2.4 On September 15, 2017, and August 6, 2018, Respondent included false information in Patient A's medical record regarding their relationship.

2.5 Respondent violated provision 3.10 of the Commission's Amended Stipulation to Informal Disposition in case number M2013-1114, which required him to obey all federal, state and local laws and all administrative rules governing the practice of the profession in Washington.

## **3. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The Commission and Respondent agree to the entry of the following Conclusions of Law:

3.1 The Commission has jurisdiction over Respondent and over the subject matter of this proceeding.

3.2 Respondent has committed unprofessional conduct in violation of RCW 18.130.180 RCW 18.130.180(1), (9), (13), and (24), and RCW 18.130.180(7), based on WAC 246-919-630.

3.3 The above violations provide grounds for imposing sanctions under RCW 18.130.160.

#### **4. AGREED ORDER**

Based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, Respondent agrees to entry of the following Agreed Order:

4.1 **Voluntary Surrender.** Respondent **PERMANENTLY SURRENDERS** his license. Respondent must not resume the practice of medicine in the State of Washington including temporary, emergency, or volunteer practice. Respondent acknowledges that he is ineligible to renew, reactivate, or to practice subject to a retired active license as a physician in the state of Washington. This voluntary surrender is permanent and is effective on the effective date of this Agreed Order.

4.2 **Return of License.** Respondent agrees to immediately return his wallet license card and wall license certificate, if they exist, to: Compliance Officer, Washington Medical Commission, P.O. Box 47866, Olympia, WA 98504-7866.

4.3 **Effective Date of Order.** The effective date of this Agreed Order is the date the Adjudicative Clerk Office places the signed Agreed Order into the U.S. mail. If required, Respondent must not submit any fees or compliance documents until after the effective date of this Agreed Order.

#### **5. COMPLIANCE WITH SANCTION RULES AND OTHER STATUTORY PROVISIONS**

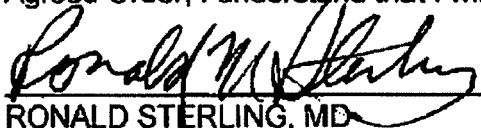
5.1 The Commission applies WAC 246-16-800, et seq., to determine appropriate sanctions. WAC 246-16-800(2)(b)(iii) provides for surrender of a credential by a license holder as an alternative to imposing sanctions under the sanction schedules in WAC 246-16-800(3). Surrender may be imposed when the license holder is at the end of his effective practice and surrender alone is sufficient to protect the public. Respondent's age and communications with the Commission indicate he is at the end of his effective practice and surrender of his license will protect the public.

5.2 RCW 18.130.063 requires a practitioner sanctioned by an order of the Commission on or after October 1, 2019, for an act or acts of unprofessional conduct

involving sexual misconduct to provide a disclosure to any patient scheduled for an appointment with the practitioner during the period of time the practitioner is subject to the order. The disclosure must include a copy of the order. In this case, Respondent is surrendering his license to practice medicine and will not have any patients to whom disclosure will be required.

**6. RESPONDENT'S ACCEPTANCE**

I, RONALD STERLING, MD, Respondent, certify that I have read this Agreed Order in its entirety; that my counsel of record, if any, has fully explained the legal significance and consequence of it; that I fully understand and agree to all of it; and that it may be presented to the Commission without my appearance. If the Commission accepts the Agreed Order, I understand that I will receive a signed copy.

  
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RONALD STERLING, MD  
RESPONDENT

02/11/2021  
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DATE

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ATTORNEY FOR RESPONDENT

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DATE

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**7. COMMISSION'S ACCEPTANCE AND ORDER**

The Commission accepts and enters this Stipulated Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Agreed Order.

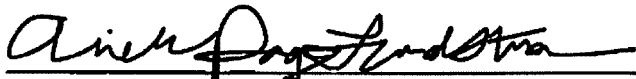
DATED: \_\_\_\_\_ March 4 \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON MEDICAL COMMISSION



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PANEL CHAIR

PRESENTED BY:



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ARIELE PAGE LANDSTROM, WSBA NO. 38357  
COMMISSION STAFF ATTORNEY