



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: Ronald M. Sterling, MD
Master Case No.: M2019-998
Document: Statement of Charges

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:

The identity of the complainant if the person is a consumer, health care provider, or employee, pursuant to RCW 43.70.075 (Identity of Whistleblower Protected) and/or the identity of a patient, pursuant to RCW 70.02.020 (Medical Records - Health Care Information Access and Disclosure)

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

STATEMENT OF CHARGES

The Executive Director of the Washington Medical Commission (Commission) is authorized to make the allegations below, which are supported by the evidence contained in Commission file number 2019-3632. The patient referred to in this Statement of Charges is identified in the attached Confidential Schedule.

1. ALLEGED FACTS

1.1 On July 21, 2000, the state of Washington issued Respondent a license to practice as a physician and surgeon. Respondent's license is currently active.

Respondent is not board certified, but self-designates a specialty in geriatric psychiatry.

1.2 On March 29, 2014, Patient A began seeing Respondent for psychiatric treatment. Respondent documented that Patient A wanted to find out if she had ADHD. Respondent prescribed various medications for Patient A. Respondent documented visits until August 6, 2018, and provided medication refills to Patient A until November 19, 2018.

1.3 Between approximately September 30, 2014, and October 25, 2018, Respondent and Patient A exchanged numerous personal emails. In the 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.

1.4 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.

1.5 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.

1.6 On July, 1, 2014, the Commission approved a Stipulation to Informal Disposition (STID) in case number M2013-1114 in which Respondent agreed to a disposition of allegations including substandard prescribing and boundary crossings with a patient in which he performed paid web services for the patient and sold the patient's art for a commission. In November 2018, the Commission approved a modification to the STID in the form of an Amended STID. Paragraphs 3.10 and 3.12 of both the original and Amended STID state:

"3.10 **Obey Laws.** Respondent must obey all federal, state and local laws and all administrative rules governing the practice of the profession in Washington."

"3.12 **Violations.** If Respondent violates any provision of this Stipulation in any respect, the Commission may initiate further action against Respondent's license."

2. ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

2.1 Based on the Alleged Facts, Respondent has committed unprofessional conduct in violation of RCW 18.130.180(1), (9), (13), and (24), and RCW 18.130.180(7), based on WAC 246-919-630, which provide:

RCW 18.130.180 Unprofessional conduct. The following conduct, acts, or conditions constitute unprofessional conduct for any license holder under the jurisdiction of this chapter:

(1) The commission of any act involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, or corruption relating to the practice of the person's profession, whether the act constitutes a crime or not. If the act constitutes a crime, conviction in a criminal proceeding is not a condition precedent to disciplinary action. ...;

...

(7) Violation of any state or federal statute or administrative rule regulating the profession in question, including any statute or rule defining or establishing standards of patient care or professional conduct or practice;

...

(9) Failure to comply with an order issued by the disciplining authority or a stipulation for informal disposition entered into with the disciplining authority;

...

(13) Misrepresentation or fraud in any aspect of the conduct of the business or profession;

...

(24) Abuse of a client or patient or sexual contact with a client or patient;

...

WAC 246-919-630 Sexual misconduct.

(2) A physician shall not engage in sexual misconduct with a current patient or a key third party. A physician engages in sexual misconduct when he or she engages in the following behaviors with a patient or key third party:

(a) Sexual intercourse or genital to genital contact;

(b) Oral to genital contact;

...

(d) Kissing in a romantic or sexual manner;

(e) Touching breasts, genitals or any sexualized body part for any purpose other than appropriate examination or treatment;

...

(j) Soliciting a date;

(k) Engaging in a conversation regarding the sexual history, preferences or fantasies of the physician.

...

2.2 The above violations provide grounds for imposing sanctions under

RCW 18.130.160.

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3. NOTICE TO RESPONDENT

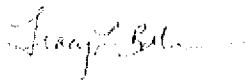
The charges in this document affect the public health and safety. The Executive Director of the Commission directs that a notice be issued and served on Respondent as provided by law, giving Respondent the opportunity to defend against these charges. If Respondent fails to defend against these charges, Respondent shall be subject to discipline and the imposition of sanctions under Chapter 18.130 RCW.

DATED: _____ April 28, _____, 2020.

STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON MEDICAL COMMISSION



MELANIE DE LEON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



TRACY L. BAHM, WSBA # 22950
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

CONFIDENTIAL SCHEDULE

This information is confidential and is NOT to be released without the consent of the individual or individuals named below. RCW 42.56.240(1)

Patient A

