



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: James F. Hammel, MD  
Master Case No.: M2023-493  
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:

Investigative, law enforcement, and crime victim information is exempt from public inspection and copying pursuant to RCW 42.56.240(1).

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:

**JAMES F. HAMMEL, MD**  
License No. MD.MD.60317521

Respondent.

**No. M2023-493**

**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 2022-14154 and 2023-836. The patient referred to in this Statement of Charges is identified in the attached Confidential Schedule.

**1. ALLEGED FACTS**

1.1 On November 14, 2012, the state of Washington issued Respondent a license to practice as a physician and surgeon. Respondent's license is currently active. Respondent is board certified in psychiatry and palliative medicine.

1.2 Between June 2015 and April 2020, Respondent provided psychotherapy and prescribed medication, including controlled substances, to Patient A. During that time, Respondent saw Patient A every one to two weeks and had approximately 138 sessions with Patient A.

1.3 During the period of treatment, Respondent violated psychiatrist-patient boundaries by sending text messages and email messages to Patient A, many of which were in the evenings and on the weekends, in which he shared details of his personal life, legal issues with the mother of his child, personal and legal issues with his wife, photos of his daughter, and his health conditions, including treatment he was receiving. In their therapy sessions, Respondent spoke more about his personal issues than he did providing Patient A with therapeutic care. Respondent's communications with Patient A resulted in Patient A continually expressing empathy for Respondent's troubles and Respondent continually expressing gratitude to Patient A for her empathy and kindness. Respondent and Patient A essentially reversed roles: Patient A became the therapist and Respondent became the patient. Respondent effectively abandoned his care of Patient A.

1.4 Respondent's violation of psychiatrist-patient boundaries was emotionally devastating to Patient A. Patient A ended the relationship in April 2020 and sought care with another provider.

## 2. ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

2.1 Based on the Alleged Facts, Respondent has committed unprofessional conduct in violation of RCW 18.130.180(4):

**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:

(4) Incompetence, negligence, or malpractice which results in injury to a patient or which creates an unreasonable risk that a patient may be harmed.

...

2.2 The above violation provides grounds for imposing sanctions under RCW 18.130.160.

## 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 1, 2024.

STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON MEDICAL COMMISSION

  
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MICAH MATTHEWS  
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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KRISTIN G. BREWER, WSBA #38494  
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

