# WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF REGULATION & LICENSING



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#### STATE OF WISCONSIN

#### BEFORE THE MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY			
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST			
VICTORIA FETTER, M.D.	Case No. LS0002241MED		
RESPONDENT.			
	FINAL DECISION AND ORDER		
The parties to this action for the purposes of Wis State 8, 227.53 are:			

The parties to this action for the purposes of Wis. Stats. §. 227.53 are:

Victoria Fetter, M.D. 2040 W. Wisconsin Ave. Suite 515 Milwaukee, WI 53233

Wisconsin Medical Examining Board P.O. Box 8935 Madison, WI 53708-8935

Department of Regulation and Licensing Division of Enforcement P.O. Box 8935 Madison, WI 53708-8935

The parties in this matter agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final decision of this matter, subject to the approval of the Medical Examining Board. The Board has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

Accordingly, the Board in this matter adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following:

### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

- 1. Victoria Fetter, M.D., Respondent, date of birth November 8, 1941, is licensed and currently registered, to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin, by the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board pursuant to license number 16473, which was first granted August 9, 1968.
- 2. Respondent's last address reported to the Department of Regulation and Licensing is 2040 W. Wisconsin Ave., Suite 515, Milwaukee, WI, 53233.
- 3. Respondent's specialty is psychiatry and Respondent has practiced at the address in Finding of Fact 2 at all times relevant to this matter.
- 4. Respondent provided Mrs. A with psychiatric services including medications and psychotherapy from July 27, 1994 until February 17, 1997.
- 5. Respondent initially diagnosed Mrs. A with major depression and mixed personality disorder. Mrs. A had a prior history of suicide attempts. Respondent hospitalized Mrs. A July 7 to 18, 1995, as a result of Mrs. A being a

danger to herself because of suicidal ideation. Later, Respondent diagnosed Mrs. A with bi-polar affective disorder

- 6. In approximately mid-December, 1996, Mrs. A's three adult children and Mr. A, who was Mrs. A's estranged husband, attended a therapy session Mrs. A had with Respondent. Although therapeutic issues were discussed in that session, Mrs. A did not authorize, or consent to, Respondent providing confidential information to her children or Mr. A after that session.
- 7. Respondent asked Mrs. A to provide Respondent with Mrs. A's children's telephone numbers. Mrs. A refused to do so.
- 8. On February 14, 1997, Respondent sent Mrs. A a letter, which stated, among other things: "Should you feel able and willing to accept the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship, I would be available to continue the work we have begun, with commendable results thus far." The letter lists the issues which Mrs. A still needed to address. There was no indication that Mrs. A was a risk of harming herself or others.
- 9. The morning of February 17, 1997, Mrs. A had a treatment session with Respondent and at that session discharged Respondent as Mrs. A's psychiatrist. Mrs. A was not a threat to others at that time.
- 10. Immediately after the treatment session of February 17, 1997, Respondent called Mrs. A's estranged husband Mr. A, without Mrs. A's consent or knowledge, and obtained the telephone numbers of Mrs. A's children from Mr. A...
- 11. As Mrs. A's psychiatrist, Respondent was to keep confidential anything Mrs. A told Respondent and anything Respondent observed about Mrs. A, unless Mrs. A consented to the disclosure or Respondent was lawfully required to divulge the information.
- 12. Still later on February 17, 1997, Respondent called Mrs. A's son, without Mrs. A's consent or knowledge. According to Mrs. A's son, the conversation lasted 40-45 minutes, and Respondent related the following confidential information about Mrs. A, some of which was not true:
  - a. Mrs. A had serious problems.
  - b. Mrs. A had been "pestering" Respondent and Respondent requested B's help.
    - c. Respondent's criticism of Mrs. A's mother and her actions towards Mrs. A.
- 13. The evening of February 17, 1997 Respondent called Mrs. A's older daughter, without Mrs. A's consent or knowledge. According to that daughter, the conversation lasted approximately 45 minutes, and Respondent related the following confidential information about Mrs. A, some of which was not true:
  - a. Mrs. A was crazy.
    - b. Mrs. A had left a long, rude message on Respondent's answering machine.
  - c. The nature of the relationship between Mrs. A and Mr. A, and specifically the anger that Mrs. A had towards her estranged husband.
  - d. Mrs. A's mother had not treated Mrs. A properly when Mrs. A was a child.
- 14. On April 11, 1997, Mrs. A's younger daughter attempted to contact Respondent because of concerns that daughter had for Mrs. A and Mr. A, and the divorce that was pending. One of the things that daughter was interested in learning was whether Mrs. A might harm Mr. A. That daughter left a message for Respondent and later that day Respondent returned the call, without Mrs. A's consent or knowledge. According to that daughter, Respondent related the following confidential information about Mrs. A, some of which was not true:
  - a. Mrs. A did not own a gun, but if she had, the earlier suicide attempts would have been successful.
  - b. Respondent did not feel that Mrs. A would physically harm Mr. A.
  - c. The daughter did not really know her mother.
  - d. Mrs. A had pent-up anger, especially towards Mr. A, and was just beginning to release it.
  - e. Mrs. A never really loved Mr. A, but married him because Mrs. A's father had said that Mr. A was a good man for her.
  - f. Mrs. A had been intimately involved with a married supervisor from work prior to marrying Mr. A.

- g. Mrs. A was no match for Mr. A, and Mr. A could not possibly have been happy with Mrs. A because she was less educated and intelligent than he was.
- h. Mrs. A felt trapped and only stayed in the relationship because of the kids.
- i. Respondent criticized Mrs. A's mother by saying that she "used to fool around with another man" while Mrs. A's father was on deathly ill.
- j. Mrs. A's mother had brought another man into the house and Mrs. A's father had discovered them together and chased the man out.
- k. Mrs. A's inferiority complex comes from the way her mother treated her when Mrs. A was a child.
- I. Mrs. A had bipolar disorder and severe stomach ailments.
- m. Mrs. A needs to see a new therapist.
- n. Issues regarding the family's relationships.
- o. Respondent had given Mrs. A the name of a good female lawyer to contact, to start divorce proceedings against Mr. A.
- 15. Shortly after Respondent revealed Mrs. A's confidential information to Mrs. A's children, Mrs. A had no contact with from her three children, their spouses, or her grandchildren for almost one year. Mrs. A believes that the lack of contact was a result of the confidential information Respondent shared with Mrs. A's children.

#### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

- 1. The Medical Examining Board has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to
- § 448.02(3), Stats.
- 2. The Wisconsin Medical Examining Board has authority to enter into this stipulated resolution of this matter pursuant to § 227.44(5), Stats.
- 3. Respondent, by willfully divulging privileged communications and confidences entrusted by a patient and deficiencies in the character of a patient observed in the course of professional attendance, when not lawfully required to do so, has committed unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Adm. Code § MED 10.02(2)(n) and § 448.02(3), Stats.

#### **ORDER**

NOW, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Respondent, Victoria Fetter, M.D., is hereby REPRIMANDED for the conduct set out above.

#### IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that

- 1. Within 3 months of the date of this order, Respondent shall take and complete a one-day program on the subject of appropriate boundaries in relationships between health care professionals and their clients, which course shall first be approved by Board or its designee. Among the issues the program shall address are confidentiality and health care providers fiduciary duties towards patients and clients.
- 2. If Respondent is unable to complete the course described in the preceding paragraph within 3 months of the date of this order, Respondent shall, within that period of time, petition the Board or its designee for a reasonable extension of time within which to take and complete such a course. An extension shall be granted only in the event of an illness or other circumstance, which is found to be acceptable by the Board or its designee.
- 3. Respondent shall provide proof sufficient to the Board of her satisfactory completion of the education within 30 days of completion.
- 4. Any request for an extension of the time within which to complete the course and evidence of completion of the education required by this order shall be mailed or delivered to:

Department Monitor

Department of Regulation And Licensing

Division of Enforcement

1400 East Washington Ave.
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935
5. Respondent shall bear all costs incurred as a result of satisfying this Order.
The rights of a party aggrieved by this Decision to petition the Board for rehearing and to petition for judicial review are set forth on the attached "Notice of Appeal Information".

Ronald Grossman, M.D.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin this 24th day of February, 2000.

Secretary

Medical Examining Board

# WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF REGULATION & LICENSING



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# STATE OF WISCONSIN BEFORE THE MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

: FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

VICTORIA FETTER, M.D., : LS 0808291 MED

RESPONDENT. :

[Division of Enforcement Case #'s 06 MED 406 & 07 MED 406]

Victoria Fetter, M.D. 1301 N. Astor Street Milwaukee, WI 53202

Division of Enforcement
Department of Regulation and Licensing
1400 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

Wisconsin Medical Examining Board Department of Regulation and Licensing 1400 East Washington Avenue P.O. Box 8935 Madison, WI 53708-8935

#### PROCEDURAL HISTORY

This disciplinary proceeding was commenced on August 29, 2008. A hearing is scheduled to be held on May 6 and 7, 2009. The parties in this matter agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final decision of this matter, subject to the approval of the Medical Examining Board. The Board has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

Accordingly, the Board adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following:

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

- 1. Victoria Fetter, M.D., Respondent, date of birth November 8, 1941, is licensed and currently registered by the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin pursuant to license number 16473, which was first granted August 9, 1968.
- 2. Respondent's last address reported to the Department of Regulation and Licensing is 1301 N. Astor Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202.
  - 3. Respondent's practice specialty listed with the Department is psychiatry.

#### **Prior Disciplinary Action**

- 4. On February 24, 2000, the Board issued a Final Decision and Order taking disciplinary action against Respondent.
  - a. The Board found that during 1997, Respondent had breached a patient's confidentiality by disclosing privileged communications to others without the patient's consent.
    - b. Respondent was reprimanded for her conduct.
  - c. Respondent was also required to complete a one-day program on the subject of appropriate boundaries in relationships between health care professionals and their clients. On April 25, 2000, Respondent

completed the required education.

#### Count I

- 5. Since January 2006, Respondent has provided psychiatric services to clients at her office in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Respondent's office is located on the second floor of a professional office building in which there are approximately 20 other offices. The building has a locked lobby, but once admitted, a person is able to go anywhere in the building. There is an unlocked bathroom on the second floor to which anyone working in, or visiting, any of the offices in the building has access. In the bathroom are two trash receptacles that do not have covers. The receptacles are located under a counter, but must be pulled out in order to place trash in them. When that is done, the contents are visible.
- 6. The building management does not provide cleaning or trash removal services. From the time she moved to that building and on a regular basis, Respondent took her paper trash, which included confidential information about patients, and discarded it in the bathroom trash receptacles, where the papers were visible to anyone who happened to use the public shared bathroom and look in them. In November 2007, confidential correspondence and client records belonging to Respondent were discovered in those trash receptacles. They included originals of confidential health care records of initial assessments, mental health diagnoses, treatment sessions and other information relating to Respondent's treatment of named patients with their dates of birth.
- 7. After a client of a psychotherapist practicing in the building told the therapist the client had seen confidential health care records in the bathroom trash, the psychotherapist asked Respondent not to put records in that that trash. Respondent continued to do so and the therapist filed a complaint with the Department.
- 8. Respondent continued to discard confidential client materials in the open trash receptacles in the public bathroom until after being contacted by the Department to explain her conduct. In August 2008, upon advice of her attorney, Respondent obtained a shredder which she now uses for all confidential materials. There is no evidence that the disclosures harmed any patient.
- 9. Wis. Stat. § 146.82(1) provides that "All patient health care records shall remain confidential." By disposing of patient health care records in an open receptacle in a public bathroom, Respondent has violated this statute which is a law the circumstances of which substantially relate to the practice of medicine.

## **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

- 1. The Wisconsin Medical Examining Board has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 448.02(3) and authority to enter into this stipulated resolution of this matter pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 227.44(5).
- 2. Respondent, by engaging in the conduct set out above, has divulged privileged communications and information entrusted by a patient and has violated a law the circumstances of which substantially relate to the practice of medicine, which are unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § MED 10.02(2)(n) and (z), and is subject to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 448.02(3).

## **ORDER**

## NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

- 1. Respondent, Victoria Fetter, M.D., is hereby REPRIMANDED.
- 2. Respondent's license is LIMITED as follows:
- a. Within 90 days of the date of this Order, Respondent shall provide proof sufficient to the Board, or its designee, of Respondent's satisfactory completion of a total of twelve (12) hours of continuing medical education in psychiatrist-patient confidentiality, confidentiality of mental health treatment records and HIPAA, which course(s) shall first be approved by the Board, or its designee.
- b. Upon Respondent providing proof sufficient to the Board, or its designee, that she has completed the education, the Board shall issue an Order removing this limitation of Respondent's license.

- 3. Respondent is prohibited from applying the educational credits required by this Order toward satisfaction of the continuing education required during the November 1, 2007 through October 31, 2009 registration biennium or subsequent bienniums.
- 4. Respondent shall, within 90 days of the date of this Order, pay to the Department of Regulation and Licensing costs of this proceeding in the amount of \$2,188.00 pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 440.22(2).
- 5. Requests for approval, notification of completion of educational program(s) and payment shall be faxed, mailed or delivered to:

Department Monitor
Department of Regulation and Licensing
Division of Enforcement
1400 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935
Fax (608) 266-2264
Telephone (608) 267-3817

- 6. Violation of any of the terms of this Order may be construed as conduct imperiling public health, safety and welfare and may result in a summary suspension of Respondent's license. The Board in its discretion may in the alternative impose additional conditions and limitations or other additional discipline for a violation of any of the terms of this Order. In the event that Respondent fails to pay costs as ordered or fails to comply with the ordered continuing education, Respondent's license SHALL BE SUSPENDED, without further notice or hearing, until Respondent has complied with the terms of this Order.
  - 7. This Order is effective on the date of its signing.

Wisconsin Medical Examining Board

By: Gene Musser M.D. 5/20/09
A Member of the Board Date

STATE OF WISCONSIN BEFORE THE MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

STIPULATION

VICTORIA FETTER, M.D., LS 0808291 MED

RESPONDENT.

[Division of Enforcement Case #'s 06 MED 406 & 07 MED 406]

It is hereby stipulated and agreed, by and between Victoria Fetter, M.D., Respondent; Arthur E. Beck of Beck, Chaet, Bamberger & Polsky, S.C., attorneys for Respondent; and John R. Zwieg, attorney for the Complainant, Department of Regulation and Licensing, Division of Enforcement, as follows:

- 1 This Stipulation is entered into as a result of a pending disciplinary proceeding against Respondent's licensure by the Division of Enforcement. Respondent consents to the resolution of this matter by stipulation and without a hearing.
- Respondent understands that by signing this Stipulation, she voluntarily and knowingly waives her rights, including: the right to a hearing on the allegations against her, at which time the state has the burden of proving those allegations by a preponderance of the evidence; the right to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against her; the right to call witnesses on her behalf and to compel their attendance by subpoena; the right to testify herself; the right to file objections to any proposed decision and to present briefs or oral arguments to the officials who are to render the final decision; the right to petition for rehearing; and all other applicable rights afforded to her under the United States Constitution, the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Administrative Code, and any other provisions of state or federal law.
  - 3. Respondent has obtained advice of legal counsel prior to signing this Stipulation.
- 4 Respondent agrees to the adoption of the attached Final Decision and Order by the Board. The parties to the Stipulation consent to the entry of the attached Final Decision and Order without further notice, pleading, appearance or consent of the parties. Respondent waives all rights to any appeal of the Board's order, if adopted in the form as attached.
- If the terms of this Stipulation are not acceptable to the Board, the parties shall not be bound by the contents of this Stipulation, and the matter shall be returned to the Division of Enforcement for further proceedings. In the event that this Stipulation is not accepted by the Board, the parties agree not to contend that the Board has been prejudiced or biased in any manner by the consideration of this attempted resolution.
- The parties to this Stipulation agree that the attorney or other agent for the Division of Enforcement and any member of the Board ever assigned as a case advisor in this investigation may appear before the Board in open or closed session, without the presence of Respondent or her attorney, for purposes of speaking in support of this agreement and answering questions that any member of the Board may have in connection with the Board's deliberations on the Stipulation. Additionally, any such case advisor may vote on whether the Board should accept this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.
- Respondent is informed that should the Board adopt this Stipulation, the Board's Final Decision and Order is a public record and will be published in accordance with standard Department procedure.
  - 8. The Division of Enforcement joins Respondent in recommending that the Board adopt this Stipulation and

Victoria Fetter, M.D. Respondent 1301 N. Astor Street Milwaukee, WI 53202	Date
Arthur E. Beck Beck, Chaet, Bamberger & Polsky, S.C. Attorneys for Respondent 330 E. Kilbourn Avenue, Suite 1085 Milwaukee, WI 53202	Date
John R. Zwieg Attorney for Complainant Division of Enforcement Department of Regulation and Licensing P.O. Box 8935 Madison, WI 53708	Date

issue the attached Final Decision and Order.

# WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF REGULATION & LICENSING



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# STATE OF WISCONSIN BEFORE THE MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE LICENSE OF

VICTORIA FETTER, M.D.

ORDER DENYING MODIFICATIONS AND SUSPENDING LICENSE

Petitioner.

LS0808291MED

TO: Victoria Fetter, M.D.

% Attorney Arthur Beck
Beck, Chaet, Bamberger & Polsky, S.C.
Two Plaza East, Suite 1085
330 East Kilbourn Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202

On September 16, 2009, the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board considered the petitioner's request to modify the requirements of the Board order dated May 20, 2009. Based upon information presented the Board now finds and makes the following:

## **ORDER**

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the request to modify the terms of the May 20, 2009 order is denied.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that pursuant to the terms of the May 2, 2009 order the license of the Petitioner is SUSPENDED, effective September 16, 2009, for failing to complete the required continuing education and will remain SUSPENDED until proof of completion of the continuing education is provided.

STATE OF WISCONSIN MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

Ian Munro, M.D. Secretary of the Board 10/21/2009