



OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

DOCKET NUMBER 2014-7 :
: **18-20 TRINITY STREET**
IN THE MATTER OF A :
: **HARTFORD, CT 06106**
COMPLAINT AGAINST :
: **JUNE 15, 2015**
RALPH FORD :

STIPULATION AND CONSENT ORDER

Pursuant to the Code of Ethics, General Statutes §§ 1-79, *et seq.*, Thomas Jones, Ethics Enforcement Officer, filed a Complaint against Ralph Ford (“Dr. Ford” or “Respondent”), alleging violations of the Code of Ethics for Public Officials. Based on the investigation by the Enforcement Division of the Office of State Ethics (“OSE”), the OSE finds that there is probable cause to believe that Dr. Ford violated the Code of Ethics as further set forth herein.

The Parties have entered into this Consent Order following the issuance of the Complaint, but without any adjudication of any issue of fact or law herein.

I. STIPULATION

The Ethics Enforcement Officer and the Respondent stipulate to the following facts:

1. From no later than January, 2010 until June, 2014, the Respondent was the

Behavioral Health Clinical Director at the Greater Bridgeport Community Mental Health Center (“GBCMHC”), a state facility operated by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (“DMHAS”) located at 1635 Central Avenue in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

2. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent was a “state employee,” as that term is defined by General Statutes §1-79 (13).

3. From 1988 through the date of this Agreement, the Respondent owned and operated a private clinical practice where the Respondent was paid fees for clinical services (“private practice”).

4. The private practice was not related to the Respondent’s state job duties.

5. From on or about 2010 through on or about 2014, in the operation of his private practice, the Respondent used state resources including but not limited to, office space located at 1635 Central Avenue, in Bridgeport, state-issued computer, state e-mail account, state copier, state fax machine, and state telephone.

6. In addition, during that same period, the Respondent directed a DMHAS employee under his supervision to perform tasks related to his private practice, while on state time and being paid by the state.

7. The Respondent used state resources in the operation of his private business while on state time, and was compensated by the state for such time.

8. The Respondent gained access to state resources he used in his private practice solely by virtue of his state position.

9. General Statutes § 1-84 (c) states in pertinent part:

No public official or state employee...shall use his public office or position or any confidential information received through his holding such public office or position to obtain financial gain for himself.. or a business with which he is associated.

10. The Respondent, by using the resources provided by virtue of his state position, and directing DMHAS employees to perform tasks, for private practice purposes, used his public office or position to obtain financial gain for himself and/or a business with which he was associated, in violation of General Statutes § 1-84 (c).

11. On multiple occasions, from on or about 2010 through on or about 2014, the Respondent conducted business for his private practice on state time and in his state office, while being paid by the state for state work.

12. On multiple occasions, from on or about 2010 through on or about 2014, the Respondent contracted with other state and/or federal agencies, including the Department of Developmental Services, and the Social Security Administration (“contracting agencies”), to perform psychological evaluations of individuals referred to him by the contracting agencies, to evaluate their psychological health.

13. The psychological evaluations performed by the Respondent were then used by the contracting agencies to determine the eligibility of the individuals for the receipt of state and/or federal disability benefits.

14. On several occasions, the Respondent performed psychological evaluations on individuals who were existing DMHAS clients.

15. On multiple occasions, but no sooner than on or about 2010 through no later than 2014, the Respondent falsely approved timesheets for a DMHAS employee who

performed work for his private business or had entered into private business relationships with the Respondent.

16. On multiple occasions, but no sooner than on or about 2010 through no later than 2014, the Respondent, in conducting his private business, violated DMHAS work rules.

17. General Statutes § 1-84 (b) states in pertinent part:

No public official or state employee shall accept other employment which will either impair his independence of judgment as to his official duties or employment or require him, or induce him, to disclose confidential information acquired by him in the course of and by reason of his official duties.

18. By operating his private practice in the manner described in, the Respondent accepted other employment that impaired his independence of judgment as to his official duties, in violation of General Statutes § 1-84 (b).

II. RESPONDENT'S POSITION

1. Relative to the performance of psychological evaluations identified in paragraphs 12 and 13 in Section I, and relative to the submission of reports of the psychological evaluations to the contracting agencies, the Respondent states that at no time did he knowingly treat the individuals referred to him by the contracting agencies in his private practice.

III. JURISDICTION

1. The Ethics Enforcement Officer is authorized to investigate the Respondent's acts as set forth herein, and to enter into this Stipulation and Consent Order.

2. The provisions of this Stipulation and Consent Order apply to and are binding upon the Respondent.

3. The Respondent hereby waives all objections and defenses to the jurisdiction

of the Ethics Enforcement Officer over matters addressed in this Stipulation and Consent Order.

4. The Respondent waives any rights he may have under General Statutes §§ 1-80, 1-82, 1-82a, 1-87 and 1-88, including the right to a hearing or appeal in this case, and agrees with the Ethics Enforcement Officer to an informal disposition of this matter as authorized by General Statutes § 4-177 (c).

5. The Respondent consents to jurisdiction and venue in the Connecticut Superior Court, Judicial District of Hartford, in the event that the State of Connecticut seeks to enforce this Stipulation and Consent Order. The Respondent recognizes that the Connecticut Superior Court has the authority to specifically enforce the provisions of this Stipulation and Consent Order, including the authority to award equitable relief.

6. The terms set forth herein are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other existing or future statutory, regulatory, or other legal obligation that may be applicable to the Respondent.

7. The Respondent understands that he has a right to counsel and has been represented by counsel during the OSE's investigation and in connection with this Stipulation and Consent Order.

IV. ORDER

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to General Statutes § 4-177 (c), the Office of State Ethics hereby ORDERS, and Dr. Ford agrees, that:

1. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-88 (a) (1), Dr. Ford will cease and desist from any future violation of § 1-84 (c).

2. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-88 (a) (1), Dr. Ford will cease and desist from

any future violation of § 1-84 (b).

3. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-88 (a) (3), Dr. Ford will pay civil penalties to the State in the amount of twelve thousand five hundred dollars (\$ 12,500.00) for his violation of General Statutes § 1-84 (c) as set forth in the Complaint and herein.

4. Pursuant to General Statutes § 1-88 (a) (3), Dr. Ford will pay civil penalties to the State in the amount of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$ 2,500.00) for his violation of General Statutes § 1-84 (b) as set forth in the Complaint and herein.

5. Dr. Ford agrees not to enter into any contracts with the state to provide psychological evaluations or treatment for a period of six months immediately following the date of this stipulation agreement.

WHEREFORE, the Ethics Enforcement Officer and Dr. Ford hereby execute this Stipulation and Consent Order dated June 15, 2015.

Dated: 6-19-2015



Dr. Ralph Ford

Dated: JULY 9, 2015



Thomas K. Jones
Ethics Enforcement Officer
Connecticut Office of State Ethics
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