

<p>IN THE MATTER OF</p> <p>Rebecca D. Norris, LCPC</p> <p>RESPONDENT</p> <p>Certificate Number: LC1915</p> <p>* * * * *</p>	<p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p>	<p>BEFORE THE MARYLAND STATE</p> <p>BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL</p> <p>COUNSELORS AND THERAPISTS</p> <p>Case Numbers: 2015-47; 2017-14; & 2019-037</p> <p>* * * * *</p>
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FINAL ORDER

On or about March 15, 2019, the Maryland State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists (the “Board”) notified **REBECCA D. NORRIS, LCPC** (Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor) (the “Respondent”), License Number LC1915, of its intent to revoke her license based on violations of the Maryland Professional Counselors and Therapists Act, codified at Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. (“Health Occ.”) §§ 17-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol. & 2017 Supp.).

The Board based its intent on the following provisions of law:

Health Occ. § 17-509. Denial, probation, suspension or revocation of certificate applicant or holder

Subject to the hearing provisions of § 17-511 of this subtitle, the Board, on the affirmative vote of a majority of its members then serving, may deny a license or certificate to any applicant, place any licensee or certificate holder on probation, reprimand any licensee or certificate holder, or suspend or revoke a license of any licensee or a certificate of any certificate holder if the applicant, licensee, or certificate holder:

- ...
- (6) Willfully makes or files a false report or record in the practice of counseling or therapy;
 - (9) Knowingly violates any provision of this title;
 - (10) Is convicted of or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude, whether or not any appeal or other proceeding is pending to have the conviction or plea set aside;

- (12) Submits a false statement to collect a fee;
- (14) Is disciplined by a licensing or disciplinary authority of any other state or country or convicted or disciplined by a court of any state or country for an act that would be grounds for disciplinary action under the Board's disciplinary statutes; [and]
- (16) Commits an act of immoral or unprofessional conduct in the practice of clinical or nonclinical counseling or therapy[.]

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board finds the following facts.

Background

1. At all times relevant to this Notice, the Respondent was licensed to practice as an LCPC in the State of Maryland. The Respondent was initially licensed on or about October 26, 2004, under License Number LC1915, and her license is current through January 31, 2020.

2. From 2013 through 2019, the Board received three separate complaints that the Respondent was engaging in unethical counseling practices including: fraudulent billing, unlicensed practice, criminal violations, privacy violations, etc.

3. Based on the Complaints, the Board initiated an investigation.

Investigation

4. In furtherance of the investigation, the Board's investigator obtained certified court records from the Circuit Court for Baltimore City showing that on or about July 9, 2018, the Respondent pleaded guilty to one count of felony Medicaid fraud. Specifically, the Respondent pleaded guilty to violating Md. Code Ann. Criminal Law §

8-509, “knowingly and willfully defraud or attempt to defraud a State health plan in connection with the delivery of or payment for a health care service.”

5. The certified court records indicate that on or about October 18, 2018, in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, in case number 117265002, the Respondent was convicted of felony Medicaid fraud and sentenced to five years in prison, with four years suspended.

6. In addition the Respondent was sentenced to five years supervised probation upon release from prison, with conditions, including the following:

(a) The Respondent was required to pay restitution of \$825,000 to the Office of the Attorney General, Medicaid Fraud Control Unit; and

(b) The Respondent was excluded from providing service for any federally funded health care plan.

7. According to the Statement of Facts in support of the Respondent’s guilty plea (the “Statement,” attached and incorporated herein as Attachment 1), which the Respondent did not dispute, the Respondent controlled a network of mental health care practices in Western Maryland called the Appalachian Wellness Centers (AWC). According to the Statement, Norris set all policies, the Respondent “made all hires, managed all finances and directed all billings” at AWC.

8. According to the Statement:

From 2010 to 2017, Defendant Norris and her co-conspirators ran an array of schemes at AWC that defrauded the Maryland Medicaid program. As part of these fraudulent schemes, described [in the Statement], Defendant knowingly and willfully submitted, and caused to be submitted, claims to Medicaid for services that she knew to be fraudulent. The schemes in which Defendant Norris participated resulted in an \$825,000 loss to the Maryland Medicaid program. Although a portion of those monies are disputed by the

Defendant as a fraudulent scheme, it is agreed for purposes of this plea that a portion of said monies were obtained fraudulently in a manner to satisfy the elements of the statute.

9. As the Statement describes in detail, the Respondent engaged in numerous fraudulent schemes to defraud the Maryland Medicaid program of \$825,000 over a period of approximately seven years.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent's conduct, as described above generally, constitutes violations of the provisions of the Act listed above.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing, it is this 19th day of April, 2019, by the Board hereby:

ORDERED that the Respondent's license to practice clinical professional counseling in Maryland, license number LC1915, is hereby REVOKED; and it is further

ORDERED that upon service of this Order, the Respondent shall immediately surrender to the Board all indicia of licensure the Board that are in her possession; and it is further

ORDERED that this document constitutes an Order of the Board and is therefore a public document for purposes of public disclosure, as required by Md. Code Ann., General Provisions, §§ 4-101 through 4-601 (2014).

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL


Pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 17-512(b), the Respondent has the right to take a direct judicial appeal. Any appeal shall be filed within thirty (30) days from the date of this Final Order and shall be made as provided for judicial review of a final decision in the Maryland Administrative Procedure Act, Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-222; and Title 7, Chapter 200 of the Maryland Rules of Procedure.

If the Respondent files an appeal, the Board is a party and should be served with the court's process at the following address:

Kimberly Link, Executive Director
Maryland State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215-2299

At that point, the Administrative Prosecutor is no longer a party to this case and need not be served or copied.

04/19/2019
Date



Risa L. Ganel, MS, LCMFT, Board Chair
Maryland State Board of Professional
Counselors and Therapists