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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION
EXAMINING BOARD OF SOCIAL WORKERS,
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST:

MARY JANE RIPP, C.S.W.,

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

RESPONDENT

LS0012062SOC

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

Mary Jane Ripp, C.S.W.

305 S. Shuman Street

Verona, WI 53593

Social Worker Section

Wisconsin Examining Board of Social Workers,

Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors

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 in this matter, subject to the approval of the Social Worker Section. The Section has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Mary Jane Ripp, C.S.W., Respondent, date of birth January 2, 1957, is certified by the Social Worker Section as a social worker in the state of Wisconsin pursuant to certificate number 5814, which was first granted November 1, 1995.
2. Respondent received a bachelor of science degree in social work from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh on May 31, 1980.
3. Respondent was granted certification pursuant to the grandparenting provisions of 1991 Wisconsin Act 160, § 21(2)(a)1, based upon her having a bachelor's degree and having been engaged in the practice of social work for a minimum of 400 hours in a one year period prior to May 1, 1993. For this reason, Respondent did not take the

examination otherwise required for certification.

4. Respondent's last address reported to the Department of Regulation and Licensing is 305 S. Shuman Street, Verona, WI 53593.

5. From 1987 to 1991, Respondent attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work. Respondent expected to complete all requirements necessary to obtain a master's degree in social work (MSSW) in May 1991 but had incompletes in three courses. For personal reasons, Respondent was unable to complete these courses.

6. In September 1989, while Respondent was attending graduate school, she began a field placement in the pediatric pulmonary department at University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics (UWH&C).

7. When the pediatric field placement ended in May 1990, Respondent immediately began a geriatric social work field placement at the Veterans Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. This second placement ended in October 1990.

8. From October 1990 to March 1991, Respondent was employed at UWH&C as a pediatric social worker on a limited term basis to cover an employee's maternity leave.

9. On January 1, 1991, Respondent submitted a letter to the Director of Social Services at UWH&C expressing her desire to apply for a social work position which serves the inpatient renal, plastic surgery, and thoracic surgery units. In that letter, Respondent stated that she planned to complete her MSSW in May (1991). Respondent also stated that her field placements and her experience as a limited term employee at UWH&C would make her a candidate for the opening.

10. Respondent was hired in April 1991 at an "associate social work" level and was assigned to the inpatient units at UWH&C.

11. In Spring 1991, Respondent was falling behind in her schoolwork and asked her supervisor if she could cut back her hours to work half time at UWH&C. Respondent was not allowed to do so. At this time, Respondent told the Department Director that she had obtained her master's degree when, in fact, she had not done so because she still had incompletes in three classes.

12. Respondent had intended to complete the course work necessary for her master's degree but did not do so. In Spring 1992, Respondent was unable to complete the necessary course work because she had undergone surgery to correct chronic abdominal pain related to her endometriosis. As time passed, Respondent did not know how to approach her supervisor with the fact that she had yet to complete the course work.

13. Sometime in 1994, Respondent submitted to her employer a revised curriculum vita which falsely stated that she obtained a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in May 1991.

14. In July 1994, Respondent changed positions and worked in the capacity of a master's prepared social worker within the Dialysis Unit (University Station) of UWH&C until her resignation on September 1, 1999.

15. Respondent also created professional cards which she used in her position. The cards falsely stated she had an MSSW and also stated:

MARY JANE RIPP, MSSW

Clinical Social Worker

University Station Clinics

Dialysis Program

(608) 262-5607

Paging: (608)265-7000 ID: 7232

16. In April 1999, the Coordinator of Social Work Services (Coordinator) at UWH&C requested all social work staff to submit by June 30, 1999 copies of their updated "certificates of practice" for review.

17. Respondent did not submit a copy of her updated "certificate of practice" by June 30, 1999 as required by the Coordinator. On July 14, 1999, Respondent met with the Coordinator at his request and showed him her current certificate designation - *Social Worker*. At that meeting, Respondent told the Coordinator that she did not have a master's degree in social work.

18. Prior to admitting to the Coordinator on July 14, 1999 that she did not have an MSSW, Respondent reviewed and signed, on June 8, 1999, a position description which listed her job title as "Clinical Social Worker - Ambulatory Services." Among the qualifications listed on the position description under the section entitled

"Minimum Qualifications," the following appeared:

- a. Master's degree in Social Work or Social Welfare from a college or university accredited by the National Council of Social Work Education is required.
- b. Eligibility for State of Wisconsin certification as a Certified Advanced Practice Social Worker (CAPSW), Certified Independent Social Worker (CISW), or Certified Independent Clinical Social Worker (CICSW).

19. Respondent knew at the time she signed the position description that she did not have a master's degree in social work and that she only held certification as a basic social worker.
20. As a result of the July 14 meeting, Respondent was suspended from her social work employment, pending an investigation.
21. On September 1, 1999, Respondent met with the Coordinator and stated to him that she realized she had misled the hospital and that since being suspended, she had been able to come to terms with her actions of withholding the fact that she did not have a master's degree. Respondent tendered her resignation on that date.
22. There is no allegation that Respondent failed, in any way, to perform her professional duties in a competent manner.
23. From September 20, 1999 to the present, Respondent has been employed at the Middleton Village Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, 6201 Elmwood Avenue, Middleton, WI 53562, as a geriatric social worker. Neither the Section nor the Division of Enforcement have received any complaints regarding the professional services provided by Respondent at that facility.
24. On September 14, 2000, Respondent completed an ethics course entitled "Ethics and Boundaries: Understanding Our Professional Responsibilities," sponsored by UW-Eau Claire Continuing Education in Human Sciences & Services and the Department of Social Work in cooperation with UW Extension. (4 contact hours)

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Examining Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to § 457.26(2), Stats.
2. The Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Examining Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors has authority to enter into this stipulated resolution of this matter pursuant to §227.44(5), Stats.
3. Respondent, by claiming she had a master's degree in social work when she did not, has committed unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Adm. Code § SFC 20.02(7) and is subject to discipline pursuant to §457.26(2)(h), Stats.
4. Respondent, by using the title "clinical social worker" without being certified as an independent clinical social worker, has violated § 457.04(4), Stats., and is subject to discipline pursuant to § 457.26(2)(h), Stats.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. That the certificate of Mary Jane Ripp, C.S.W., to practice as a social worker in the state of Wisconsin is hereby SUSPENDED for a period of at least six months, effective January 1, 2001.
2. That Respondent may petition the Social Worker Section for the termination of the suspension, after six months, under the following terms and conditions:
 - a. Respondent shall have successfully completed an ethics course or courses on the subject of ethics equivalent to a one day program (8 contact hours), which course(s) shall first be approved by the Section or its designee. [Respondent's completion of the course set out in finding of fact 24 satisfies 4 contact hours of this requirement.]
 - b. Respondent shall provide proof sufficient to the Section of her satisfactory completion of the course(s).
 - c. Respondent shall, at Respondent's own expense, have undergone an assessment by a mental health care provider who has been approved by the Section, with an opportunity for the Division of Enforcement to make its recommendation, prior to the evaluation being performed.

d. Respondent must provide proof sufficient to the Section that Respondent can practice with reasonable skill and safety of clients and public.

e. If the Section determines to end the suspension, Respondent's certificate shall be limited in a manner to address any concerns the Section has as a result of the conduct set out in the findings of fact and to address any recommendations resulting from the assessment. These limitations may include, but not be limited to:

i. Psychotherapy, at Respondent's expense, by a therapist approved by the Section, to address specific treatment goals, with periodic reports to the Section by the therapist.

ii. Additional professional education in any identified areas of deficiency.

iii. Restrictions on the nature of practice or practice setting or requirements for supervision of practice, by a professional approved by the Section, with periodic reports to the Section by the supervisor.

f. Respondent shall appear before the Section on an annual basis, if requested by the Section, to review the progress of any treatment and rehabilitation.

3. Any request for approval of an evaluator, therapist, supervisor or educational program required by this order shall be mailed, faxed 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

Fax: (608) 266-2264

4. If Respondent believes that the Section's refusal to end the suspension is inappropriate or that any limitation imposed or maintained by the Section under paragraph 2(e) is inappropriate, Respondent may seek a class 1 hearing pursuant to §227.01(3)(a), Stats., in which the burden shall be on Respondent to show that the Section's decision is arbitrary or capricious. The suspension or limitations on Respondent's certificate shall remain in effect until there is a final decision in Respondent's favor on the issue.

5. Violation of any term or condition of this Order, or of any limitation imposed under paragraph 2(e) above, may constitute grounds for revocation of Respondent's certificate as a social worker in Wisconsin. Should the Section determine that there is probable cause to believe that Respondent has violated the terms of this Order, or any limitation imposed under paragraph 2 above, the Section may order that Respondent's certificate be summarily suspended pending investigation of and hearing on the alleged violation.

The rights of a party aggrieved by this Decision to petition the Section for rehearing and to petition for judicial review are set forth on the attached "Notice of Appeal Information".

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin this 6th day of December, 2000.

Cornelia Gordon-Hempe

Chairperson

Social Worker Section