

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION OF THE
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING,
AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

SARAH J. PETERSON,
RESPONDENT.

:
:
: FINAL DECISION AND ORDER
:
:

0003401

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 13 SOC 073

The parties to this action for the purpose of Wis. Stat. § 227.53 are:

Sarah J. Peterson
1855 Edgewood Lane
Stevens Point, WI 54482

Social Worker Section
Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and
Social Work Examining Board
P.O. Box 8366
Madison, WI 53708-8366

Division of Legal Services and Compliance
Department of Safety and Professional Services
P.O. Box 7190
Madison, WI 53707-7190

The parties in this matter agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final disposition of this matter, subject to the approval of the Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board (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, Conclusions of Law and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent Sarah J. Peterson (dob September 25, 1986) is certified in the state of Wisconsin as a social worker, having certificate number 10878-120, first granted on April 20, 2012 and current through February 28, 2015. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (Department) is 1855 Edgewood Lane, Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54482.

2. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Respondent worked as a social worker at a county department of social services (county).

3. In April of 2013, the county discovered that Respondent had violated client confidentiality in two different cases.

4. First, Respondent faxed a legal form to a correctional institution with a client's name, identifying the children of a different client at the same facility.

5. Around the same time, Respondent drafted an extensive e-mail outlining what occurred during an emergency call. Respondent sent the email to an unrelated client rather than the intended recipient, another social worker.

6. In July 2013, the county received a letter from an incarcerated client stating that she had received a residential facility discharge summary for a child unrelated to her, as well as a draft of court-ordered conditions for another client.

7. Due to the repeated violations, Respondent was allowed to resign from her employment with the County.

8. In resolution of this matter, Respondent consents to the entry of the following Conclusions of Law and Order.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board has jurisdiction to act in this matter pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2), and is authorized to enter into the attached Stipulation pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 227.44(5).

2. By the conduct described in the Findings of Fact, Sarah J. Peterson violated Wis. Admin. Code § MPSW 20.02(22) by negligence in practice in more than one instance, by repeatedly failing to protect client confidentiality.

3. As a result of the above violations, Sarah J. Peterson is subject to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2)(h).

ORDER

1. The attached Stipulation is accepted.

2. Respondent Sarah J. Peterson is REPRIMANDED.

3. Within 90 days from the date of this Order, Sarah J. Peterson shall pay COSTS of this matter in the amount of \$200.00.

4. Payment of costs (made payable to the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services) shall be sent by Respondent to the Department Monitor at the address below:

Department Monitor
Division of Legal Services and Compliance
Department of Safety and Professional Services
P.O. Box 7190, Madison, WI 53707-7190
Telephone (608) 267-3817; Fax (608) 266-2264
DPSMonitoring@wisconsin.gov

5. 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 Section 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 Respondent fails to timely submit payment of the costs as ordered, Respondent's certificate (no. 10878-120) may, in the discretion of the Section or its designee, be SUSPENDED, without further notice or hearing, until Respondent has complied with payment of costs.

6. This Order is effective on the date of its signing.

SOCIAL WORKER SECTION OF THE WISCONSIN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING, AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

by: 
A Member of the Section

9-16-14
Date

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION OF THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY,
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

SARAH J. PETERSON,
RESPONDENT.

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:
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:
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STIPULATION

0003401

Division of Legal Services and Compliance Case No. 13 SOC 073

Respondent Sarah J. Peterson and the Division of Legal Services and Compliance, Department of Safety and Professional Services stipulate as follows:

1. This Stipulation is entered into as a result of a pending investigation by the Division of Legal Services and Compliance. Respondent consents to the resolution of this investigation by Stipulation.

2. Respondent understands that by signing this Stipulation, Respondent voluntarily and knowingly waives the following rights:

- the right to a hearing on the allegations against Respondent, 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 Respondent;
- the right to call witnesses on Respondent's behalf and to compel their attendance by subpoena;
- the right to testify on Respondent's own behalf;
- 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 Respondent under the United States Constitution, the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Administrative Code, and other provisions of state or federal law.

3. Respondent is aware of Respondent's right to seek legal representation and has been provided an opportunity to obtain legal counsel before signing this Stipulation.

4. Respondent agrees to the adoption of the attached Final Decision and Order by the Social Worker Section of the Wisconsin Marriage and Family, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board (Section). 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 Section's order, if adopted in the form as attached.

5. If the terms of this Stipulation are not acceptable to the Section, the parties shall not be bound by the contents of this Stipulation, and the matter shall then be returned to the Division of Legal Services and Compliance for further proceedings. In the event that the Stipulation is not accepted by the Section, the parties agree not to contend that the Section has been prejudiced or biased in any manner by the consideration of this attempted resolution.

6. The parties to this Stipulation agree that the attorney or other agent for the Division of Legal Services and Compliance may appear before the Section in open or closed session, without the presence of Respondent, for purposes of speaking in support of this agreement and answering questions that any member of the Section may have in connection with deliberations on the Stipulation.

7. Respondent is informed that should the Section adopt this Stipulation, the Section's Final Decision and Order is a public record and will be published in accordance with standard Department procedure.

8. The Division of Legal Services and Compliance joins Respondent in recommending the Section adopt this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.

SIGN
HERE



Sarah J. Peterson

Sarah J. Peterson, Respondent
1855 Edgewood Lane
Stevens Point, WI 54482
License no. 10878-120

7/22/14
Date

James E. Polewski

James E. Polewski, Attorney
Division of Legal Services and Compliance
P.O. Box 7190
Madison, WI 53707-7190

June 13, 2014
Date