

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

IN THE MATTER OF)	BSWE 2020-272
PROFESSIONAL LICENSE OF)	
DEBRA HUGHES)	STIPULATION
)	
(CSW-PIP 3174))	

The South Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners ("Board"), by and through its attorney, Jennifer M. Jorgenson, Assistant Attorney General, and Debra Hughes ("Hughes"), stipulate to the following:

1. During all times herein, Hughes has been and is now subject to the jurisdiction of the Board from which she holds a valid South Dakota license to practice as a Certified Social Worker in private, independent practice—license number 3174.
2. The Board has the statutory obligation to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare set forth in SDCL § 36-26.
3. Hughes is subject to the provisions of SDCL § 36-26 and ARSD 20:59.
4. The Board received information against Hughes alleging that she had her clinical privileges revoked by the Department of the Air Force in response to her development of a personal relationship with her mental health patient. The information alleged that Hughes involved the patient in her personal affairs and relationships, including using the patient to seek information on a different person for her personal gain. This relationship consisted of exchanged text messages over the span of nine days. There was no allegation that the relationship was romantic in nature.

5. The Board investigated these allegations and alleges that Hughes's conduct violated the National Association of Social Workers ("NASW") Code of Ethics in violation of SDCL § 36-26-32(6).
 6. Hughes admits to violating the NASW Code of Ethics and agrees her conduct violated SDCL § 36-26-32(6).
 7. Hughes recognizes her conduct would constitute grounds for discipline regarding her license to practice as a social worker in South Dakota under SDCL § 36-26-32(6).
 8. The intention of this Stipulation is to provide for a settlement of the licensing issues presented by Hughes's conduct, in a professional manner, without the necessity of a hearing or further proceedings.
 9. Hughes recognizes that the Board may approve this Stipulation, reject it, or modify it.
 10. In the event the Board, in its discretion, does not approve this Stipulation or a lesser sanction, this Stipulation is withdrawn and will be of no evidentiary value and will not be relied upon nor introduced by either party. Hughes agrees that if the Board rejects the Stipulation and this case proceeds to a hearing, she will assert no claim that the Board was prejudiced by its review and discussion of this Stipulation or any records or information relating thereto.
 11. Hughes has been given an opportunity to discuss this Stipulation with her attorney. She is aware of her right to a hearing in this matter, and all rights under the United States and South Dakota Constitutions, laws, rules, and regulations. Hughes hereby voluntarily waives all such rights to a contested case proceeding under SDCL § 1-26, including notice, appearance, representation by an attorney, calling witnesses, or any other rights under the Constitutions, laws, rules, and regulations.
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12. Hughes is agreeing to this Stipulation voluntarily and without duress or compulsion.
 13. Hughes agrees that the Board's executive staff may present this Stipulation to the Board and disclose to the Board all items of its investigation, including, but not limited to, any communications with Hughes.
 14. Hughes shall comply with the following terms and conditions:
 - a. Hughes shall undergo one year of supervision by a Board-approved Certified Social Worker in private, independent practice who will report to the Board regarding her performance on a monthly basis, as well as any concerns as soon as practicable; and
 - b. Hughes shall complete three Board-approved credits of continuing education classes, equivalent to forty-five contact hours of participation in a noncredit continuing education program, about ethics in the practice of social work. Those credits shall be completed within one year from the date of the adoption of this Stipulation. Credits earned before the adoption of this Stipulation shall not count towards the three credits. Hughes shall timely report her compliance to the Board's executive staff and shall provide verification to the Board when those credit hours have been completed.
 15. If Hughes fails to comply with those terms and conditions, the Board may move to revoke Hughes's license for failing to comply with this Stipulation.
 16. Hughes shall comply with the NASW Code of Ethics and all rules and regulations governing the practice of social work in South Dakota or any other jurisdiction in which she practices social work.
 17. The Board will report the status of Hughes's license to the Association of Social Work Boards, and to any applicable national database or other reporting entity as deemed appropriate by the Board in compliance with
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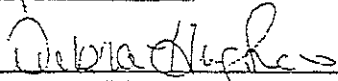
state or federal law. This Stipulation will also be publicly available on the Board's website.

18. Hughes shall provide this Stipulation to any other social work licensing entity in any other state in which she may be licensed.

19. The provisions of this Stipulation, if approved by the Board, shall become effective immediately upon the Board President signing below. The Board's executive office shall notify Hughes when that signing has occurred.

NOW, THEREFORE, the foregoing Stipulation is entered into and is respectfully submitted to the Board with the request that the Board adopt its terms and issue an order incorporating its terms in the above matter.

Dated this 22 day of April, 2021.


DEBRA HUGHES

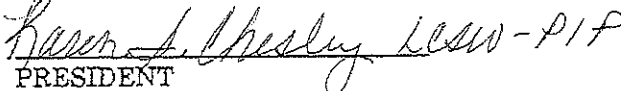
Dated this 26 day of April, 2021.


PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

The South Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners meeting on the 11th day of June, 2021 (approved) (rejected) the attached Stipulation (as written) (with the following modifications):

and issued its ORDER OF ^{Supervision} ~~SUSPENSION~~ consistent herewith as follows:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the above Stipulation is adopted as an Order of the South Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners this 11th day of June, 2021, by vote of unanimous


PRESIDENT