

IN THE MATTER OF	*	BEFORE THE STATE
SHARELLE ANN HILL, LCSW-C	*	BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK
(A.K.A. SHARELLE ANN HILL-HAYNES)	*	EXAMINERS
Respondent	*	Case No. 2010-1549
License Number: 16868	*	

\* \* \* \* \*

**CONSENT ORDER**

On November 9, 2012, the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners ("the Board") issued a "Notice of Charges under the Maryland Social Work Act" to **SHARELLE ANN HILL (A.K.A. SHARELLE ANN HILL-HAYNES)** (the "Respondent"), license number **16868**, based on alleged violations of the Maryland Social Work Examiners Act ("the Act"), Md. Health Occ. Code Ann. ("H.O.") §§ 19-101 *et seq.* (2009 Repl. Vol. and 2011 Supp.).

Based upon the allegations made in the Complaint and the Board's investigation, the Board charged the Respondent under the following provisions of the Act:

**H.O. § 19-311. Denials, reprimands, suspensions, and revocations—  
Grounds.**

Subject to the hearing provisions of § 19-312 of this subtitle, the Board may deny a license to any applicant, fine a licensee, reprimand any licensee, place any licensee on probation, or suspend or revoke a license if the applicant or licensee;

- (8) Is convicted of or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a felony or to a crime involving moral turpitude, whether or not any appeal or other proceeding is pending to have the conviction or plea set aside[.]

The parties engaged in negotiations to resolve this matter without the necessity of an evidentiary hearing. The Respondent agreed to enter into this Consent Order to

resolve the pending charges and to avoid the expense and time of proceeding to an administrative hearing. The Respondent and the Board agreed to the inclusion of Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law as required by the Board, and with the terms and conditions set forth herein.

### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Board finds the following:

1. At all times relevant, the Respondent was and is a licensed clinical social worker. The Respondent was initially licensed on April 18, 2011. Her license is currently active and is scheduled to expire on October 31, 2013.
2. At all times relevant, the Respondent was employed as a social worker in the Adult Protective Services ("APS") unit of In-Home Services, Howard County Department of Social Services ("HCDSS").
3. On June 2, 2010, the Board received a complaint from the Administrator of In-Home Services ("Witness A") alleging that the Respondent accessed a client's bank records and fraudulently exploited the client's finances. As a result, Witness A alleged that the Respondent was criminally prosecuted.
4. Thereafter the Board initiated an investigation.
5. According to an investigation report from HCDSS, the Respondent was assigned the case of an APS client ("the vulnerable adult"), an 88-year-old widow who was referred for suspected self-neglect. The Respondent assisted the vulnerable adult until she no longer needed a social worker, and her APS case was closed mid-December 2009.

6. However, after the APS case was closed, the Respondent continued to interact with the vulnerable adult, and developed a business contract with her for financial management to assist the vulnerable adult with daily mail, bill paying, and purchasing items.

7. The Respondent also brought her husband, her son and her son's girlfriend to the vulnerable adult's home and arranged for the client to employ them to complete household chores and other services for the vulnerable adult.

8. The Respondent and/or individuals identified in paragraph 7 would withdraw money from the vulnerable adult's checking account to pay for their services. The vulnerable adult became suspicious when she noticed bank transactions that she could not account for.

9. The Respondent's interaction with the vulnerable adult began in mid-December 2009 and continued until approximately April 2010.

10. The Respondent resigned in lieu of termination from her employment with HCDSS as a result of her conduct.

11. On or about January 11, 2012, in the Circuit Court for Howard County, the Respondent was convicted of obtaining property of a vulnerable adult (over \$500).<sup>1</sup> The Respondent was sentenced to three years in prison with two years suspended and three years of supervised probation. The Respondent was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$20,000 to the vulnerable adult. The Respondent paid \$9,000 of the restitution amount on May 31, 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> Two additional counts were dismissed.

12. The Respondent began serving her prison term on June 14, 2012 and served 30 days before being released. The Respondent has had no violations of her probation since her release.

13. The Respondent's conduct, as described above constitutes, in whole or in part, violation of H.O. § 19-311(8) is convicted of or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to a felony or to a crime involving moral turpitude, whether or not any appeal or other proceeding is pending to have the conviction or plea set aside.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concluded that, if proven true, the factual allegations would support a finding as a matter of law that the Respondent violated H.O. §§19-311(8).

### **ORDER**

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and the agreed upon terms of the resolution of the Charges by consent at the CRC, on this 13<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2013, by a majority of the full authorized membership of the Board considering this case, it is hereby

**ORDERED** that the Respondent's license to practice social work in the State of Maryland is **SUSPENDED** for a period of **THIRTY (30) MONTHS** starting **September 13, 2013**; and it is further

**ORDERED** that after thirty (30) months, the Respondent may submit a written petition to the Board requesting that the suspension of her license be terminated. After consideration of the petition, the suspension may be terminated, through an order of the Board, or a designated Board committee; and it is further

ORDERED that Respondent may submit a written petition to the Board requesting early termination of her suspension upon satisfactory completion of her criminal probation. However, it is within the Board's discretion as to whether such a petition will be granted; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall enroll in and successfully complete a one-to-one, Board approved ethics tutorial or may apply for Board approval of prior ethics courses completed to satisfy this requirement. After the successful completion of the one-on-one ethics tutorial, the instructor shall provide the Board with a written report detailing the Respondent's participation in and completion of the course; and it is further

ORDERED that upon the termination of the suspension of the Respondent's license, and once the Respondent begins employment as a social worker, the Respondent shall be placed on Board-supervised probation for a period of **TWO (2) YEARS** and until the following terms and conditions are fully and satisfactorily complied with:

1. The Respondent's status as a social worker will be listed in the Board's computer records and website as being on "Probation";
2. The Respondent shall provide a copy of this Consent Order to her employer within **five (5) days** of commencing any employment;
3. The Respondent shall secure a Board-certified supervisor ("supervisor") who shall supply the Board with quarterly, written reports on the Respondent's practice. The Respondent shall provide the supervisor with a copy of this Consent Order prior to their initial meeting, and the Board may release to the supervisor any portion of the

investigative file as is deemed necessary by the Board and/or supervisor, provided that a copy of the investigative file is also released to the Respondent;

4. A negative report from the Respondent's supervisor may result in a violation of this Consent Order and further sanctions at the Board's discretion, after notice and opportunity for hearing; and

5. The Respondent shall obey all state and federal laws. If the Respondent is charged with, convicted of, or pleads guilty to, any crimes, whether or not any appeal or other proceeding is pending to have the conviction or plea set aside, the Respondent shall notify the Board, in writing, of any criminal charge(s), conviction(s), or guilty plea(s) within **TEN (10) DAYS** of the conviction or guilty plea. Failure to report a criminal charge, conviction, or guilty plea to the Board in writing within **TEN (10) DAYS** is a violation of probation and this Consent Order;

6. The Respondent shall practice social work according to the Maryland Social Work Act and in accordance with all applicable laws, statutes and regulations pertaining to the practice of social work; and it is further

**ORDERED** that after **TWO (2) YEARS** from the effective date of the Respondent's probationary period, of this Consent Order, the Respondent may submit a written petition to the Board requesting termination of probation. After consideration of the petition, the probation may be terminated, through an order of the Board, or a designated Board committee. The Board, or designated Board committee, will grant the termination if the Respondent has fully and satisfactorily complied with all of the probationary terms and conditions and there are no pending complaints related to the charges; and it is further

**ORDERED** that if the Respondent violates any of the terms and conditions of Probation and this Consent Order, the Board, in its discretion, after notice and an opportunity for a show cause hearing before the Board, may impose any sanction which the Board may have imposed in this case, including a probationary term and conditions of probation, reprimand, suspension, lifting the stay of suspension, revocation and/or a monetary penalty, said allegations of violation of the terms and condition of this Consent Order shall be proven by a preponderance of the evidence; and it is further

**ORDERED** that the Respondent is solely responsible for all costs incurred in fulfilling the terms and conditions of the Consent Order; and it is further

**ORDERED** that this Consent Order is a **PUBLIC DOCUMENT**, pursuant to Md. State Gov't Code Ann. §§ 10-611 et seq. (2009 Repl. Vol. and 2011 Supp.), and is reportable to any entity to which the Board is obligated to report.

9/13/13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Judy Levy, LCSW-C, Board Chair  
State Board of Social Work Examiners

## CONSENT

I, Sharelle Ann Hill, acknowledge that I have consulted with counsel before signing this document. By this Consent, I accept to be bound by this Consent Order and its conditions and restrictions. I waive any rights I may have had to contest the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.

I acknowledge the validity of this Consent Order as if entered into after the conclusion of a formal evidentiary hearing in which I would have had the right to counsel, to confront witnesses, to give testimony, to call witnesses on my own behalf, and to all other substantive and procedural protections as provided by law. I acknowledge the legal authority and the jurisdiction of the Board to initiate these proceedings and to issue and enforce this Consent Order. I also affirm that I am waiving my right to appeal any adverse ruling of the Board that might have followed any such hearing.

I sign this Consent Order after having had an opportunity to consult with counsel, without reservation, and I fully understand and comprehend the language, meaning and terms of this Consent Order. I voluntarily sign this Order, and understand its meaning and effect.

7/19/13

Date

*Sharelle Hill, LCSW-C*  
Sharelle Ann Hill, LCSW-C

Read and approved:

*Rachel I. Vigilanti*

Rachel I. Vigilanti, Esq.  
Counsel for Sharelle Hill, LCSW-C

**NOTARY**

**STATE OF MARYLAND**

**CITY/COUNTY OF Montgomery :**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2013, before me, a Notary Public of the foregoing State personally appeared Sharelle Ann Hill, and made oath in due form of law that signing the foregoing Consent Order was her voluntary act and deed, and the statements made herein are true and correct.

AS WITNESSETH my hand and notarial seal.

*Sandra L. Green*  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: 12/4/2016

SANDRA L. GREEN  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD  
My Commission Expires 12/4/2016