STATE OF MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE STATE BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS

IN THE MATTER OF:	*	
SALLIE E. MORRIS, D.V.M.	*	DOCKET NO. 14-27
LICENSE NO. 2191	*	

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CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER

This Consent Agreement and Order (Consent Agreement), dated this 7th day of January Dec, 2014, is between the Maryland State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (Board) and Sallie E. Morris, D.V.M. (Dr. Morris), License No. 2191. This Consent Agreement resolves the charges filed by the Board on December 11, 2013 in Docket Number 14-27. The charges allege that Dr. Morris violated certain Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR); specifically, 15.14.01.04 pertaining to professional conduct; 15.14.01.11 pertaining to annual registration; 15.14.10.03 pertaining to license renewal; and 15.14.11.03 pertaining to regulatory violations. The violations allegedly occurred in association with license registration renewal for fiscal year (FY) 2014. Subsequently, the parties reached a resolution in this matter. By entering into this Consent Agreement, Dr. Morris waives the right to a hearing and appeal on the charges in Docket Number 14-27. Dr. Morris has no prior disciplinary history with the Board since being licensed in 1979.

Under State law, the Board is the licensing authority responsible for regulating the practice of veterinary medicine in this State, which includes filing disciplinary actions against veterinarians charged with violating provisions of the Veterinary Practice Act, Agriculture Article §§ 2-301 - 2-316, Annotated Code of Maryland and related Code of Maryland Regulations 15.14.01 - 15.14.17. As part of its authority, the Board "may refuse, suspend, or revoke any application or license, and censure or place on probation any licensee . . . if the veterinarian or veterinary practitioner . . . [f]ails to comply with Board rules and regulations after receiving a license[.]" Md. Code Ann., Agric. Art., § 2-310(8). In addition, the Board may impose a civil penalty of not more than $5,000 for a first offense, or $10,000 for a second or subsequent offense, in lieu of or in addition to suspending, or revoking a veterinarian's license, respectively. Md. Code Ann., Agric. Art., § 2-310.1. In setting the amount of a civil penalty, the Board shall consider the severity of the violation, the good faith of the violator,

and any history of prior violations as well as the Board's regulatory civil penalty standards. Md. Code Ann., State Gov't Art. § 10-1001(b); COMAR 15.14.11 Civil Penalty Standards for Veterinarians.

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Sallie E. Morris, D.V.M., License No. 2191, by entering into and signing this Consent Agreement, while generally and specifically denying liability in this matter, agrees to the provisions of this Consent Agreement, acknowledging that the Board has sufficient evidence to find, as fact, and conclude as a matter of law that she did violate certain Code of Maryland Regulations adopted under the Veterinary Practice Act; specifically, 15.14.01.04 pertaining to professional conduct; 15.14.01.11 pertaining to annual registration; 15.14.10.03 pertaining to license renewal; and 15.14.11.03 pertaining to regulatory violations. Specifically:

1. Dr. Morris violated 15.14.01.04 pertaining to professional conduct by completing her FY2014 registration renewal on or about June 28, 2013 dishonestly by indicating that she had obtained 18 credit hours of CE during the prior year or years;
2. Dr. Morris violated 15.14.01.11 pertaining to annual registration by practicing veterinary medicine in July, August, September, and October of 2013 at Rocky Gorge Animal Hospital, located at 7515 Brooklyn Bridge Road, in Laurel, Maryland 20707 by treating certain companion animals without a valid registration for FY2014;
3. Dr. Morris violated 15.14.10.03 pertaining to license renewal by failing to complete during the prior year or years required CE credit hours for registration renewal for FY2014; and
4. Dr. Morris violated 15.14.11.03 pertaining to regulatory violations by obtaining a license to practice veterinary medicine by misrepresenting her completed CE coursework for registration renewal for FY2014.

Taking all the facts and circumstances into consideration, including the severity of the violations, Dr. Morris's lack of a disciplinary history with the Board, and Dr. Morris's good faith effort to resolve this matter promptly, the Board concluded that the most reasonable and appropriate resolution in these matters included the following sanctions.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 7th day of January, 2014, by the Maryland State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, ORDERED that:

A. For the violations of COMAR 15.14.01.04 Professional Conduct; COMAR 15.14.01.11 Annual Registration; COMAR 15.14.10.03 License Renewal; and COMAR 15.14.11.03 Violations, Dr. Morris is assessed a civil penalty in the total amount of $2,950 ($1,000 for violating 15.14.01.04; $450 for violating 15.14.01.11; $500 for violating 15.14.10.03; and $1,000 for violating 15.14.11.03). Payment shall be made to the Maryland Department of Agriculture ("MDA") with the notation "SBVME – 14-27" within 30 days of the date of the Order.

B. Dr. Morris's License No. 2191 shall be suspended for four weeks (two weeks stayed). The Board agrees that Dr. Morris may serve the two weeks of suspension beginning on Tuesday, December 24, 2013 and ending at close of business on Monday, January 6, 2014. The stay of suspension of the license is contingent upon compliance with the conditions of probation.

C. Dr. Morris shall serve a period of probation of three years. While on probation, the veterinarian shall obey all laws and regulations governing the practice of veterinary medicine in this State and the conditions of this Consent Agreement. Violation of probation means that the veterinarian is charged and the Board ultimately concludes that the veterinarian violated the Veterinary Practice Act, related regulations, or the terms of this Consent Agreement during the period of probation. Violation of probation will result in any stay of sanctions being lifted, and the Board ordering the veterinarian to comply with the sanctions; in this case, suspension of the license for up to two additional weeks.

D. As a condition of probation, within one year of the date of this Order, Dr. Morris shall complete 6 credit hours of continuing education (CE) in Dr. James Wilson's on-line course, Veterinary Law and Ethics, to include the section on recordkeeping. Within 30 days of completion of the CE, the veterinarian shall forward to the Board documentation from the CE provider showing proof of completion of the CE credits required under this Order. Proof from the CE provider shall include Dr. Morris's name, the number of hours of CE completed, the topics covered, and the dates the CE were given. Completion of this CE will **not** be counted towards the 18 credit hours of CE required annually for re-registration of the veterinary license.

Chris H. Runde, DVM

Chris H. Runde, D.V.M.
President
State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners

CONSENT

I, Sallie E. Morris, acknowledge that I have had an opportunity to consult with legal counsel before entering into and signing this document. By this Consent, I hereby acknowledge the legal authority and the jurisdiction of the Board over this matter and to issue and enforce this Consent Agreement. In order to resolve this matter, I agree to accept and submit to the foregoing Consent Agreement, consisting of five pages, including this page. I sign this Consent without reservation as my voluntary act after having had an opportunity to consult with counsel, and I acknowledge that I fully understand the language, meaning, and terms of this Consent Agreement.

12/20/13
Date

Sallie E Morris, D.V.M.

NOTARY

STATE OF MARYLAND

CITY/COUNTY OF PRINCE GEORGE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 20th day of DEC, 2013, before me, a Notary Public of the State and City/County aforesaid, personally appeared SALLIE E. MORRIS, D.V.M., and made oath in due form of law that the foregoing Consent Agreement and Order was her voluntary act and deed.

AS WITNESS my hand and notarial seal.

Notary Public
My Commission expires:

SEONG HEE SHIN
NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF MARYLAND
My Commission Expires September 24, 2015