

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

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CHRISTOPHER M.N. GRIFFITHS, D.V.M.

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DOCKET NO. 13-30C

LICENSE NO. 5593

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CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER

This Consent Agreement and Order (Consent Agreement), dated this 21 day of November, 2013, is between the Maryland State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (Board) and Christopher M.N. Griffiths, D.V.M. (Dr. Griffiths), License No. 5593. This Consent Agreement resolves a charging document filed by the Board on July 26, 2013 in Docket Number 13-30C. The charging document alleged that Dr. Griffiths violated the Maryland Veterinary Practice Act and related Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), including record keeping for Laura Shenk's four year-old female Shetland sheepdog, "Pippy," on August 2, 2012 at Walkersville Veterinary Clinic in Walkersville, MD. On August 5, 2013, Dr. Griffiths requested a hearing before the Board. Thereafter, the parties entered into discussions and reached a resolution. Dr. Griffiths has no prior disciplinary history with the Board. Walkersville Veterinary Clinic also implemented staff training and improved record-keeping procedures in response to this matter. By entering into this Consent Agreement, Dr. Griffiths waives the right to a hearing and appeal in Docket No. 13-30C.

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 and related regulations. 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 regulation 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 \$5,000.00 for a first offense, or \$10,000.00 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

Dr. Griffiths, by entering into and signing this Consent Agreement, while generally and specifically denying liability in this case, agrees to this Consent Agreement, acknowledging that the Board has sufficient evidence to find, as fact, and conclude, as a matter of law, that he violated the Veterinary Practice Act and a related regulation; specifically, COMAR 15.14.01.10, pertaining to record keeping, on August 2, 2012 at Walkersville Veterinary Clinic, 10559 Glade Road in Walkersville, MD 21793, when he did not prepare a discharge note at the time of release for Laura Shenk's four year-old Shetland sheepdog, "Pippy," and when he did not document his subsequent phone call and recommendation to Ms. Shenk that "Pippy" be taken to a referral facility for additional care and treatment.

Taking all of the facts and circumstances into account, including the nature of the violation and mitigating factors, Dr. Griffiths' lack of any prior disciplinary history with the Board, and Dr. Griffiths' good faith efforts to resolve the matter, the Board concluded that the following sanctions were reasonable and appropriate.

ORDER

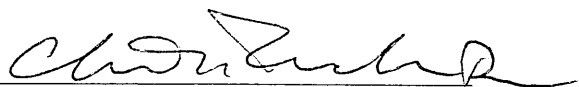
Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 21 day of November, 2013, by the Maryland State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, **ORDERED** that:

1. Dr. Griffiths is assessed a civil penalty in the amount of \$600.00 for two violations of COMAR 15.14.01.10, Record Keeping, payment to be made within 30 days of the date of this Order to the Maryland State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (SBVME). In lieu of paying the civil penalty, Dr. Griffiths may make a charitable donation to the SPCA of Maryland in the amount of \$600.00 within 30 days of the date of this Order, with documentation of the payment from the SPCA within 30 days of the date of donation.

2. Dr. Griffiths shall serve a period of probation of three months. 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, and may result in further disciplinary action and sanctions.

3. As a condition of probation, Dr. Griffiths shall complete a total of 6 credit (program) hours of continuing education (CE) in emergency and critical care medicine. Within 30 days of completion of the CE, the veterinarian shall forward to the Board proof of completion as required under this Order from the CE provider. Proof will include Dr. Griffiths' name, the number of credit hours of CE completed, the topics covered, and the dates the CE courses were given. Completion of the CE condition of probation will not be counted toward the 18 credit hours of CE required annually for re-registration of the veterinary license.



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

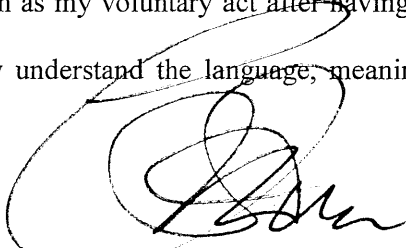


CONSENT

I, Christopher M.N. Griffiths, D.V.M., acknowledge that I have had an opportunity to consult with legal counsel before entering into this Consent Agreement. By signing this Consent, I hereby acknowledge the legal authority of the Board over this matter and to issue and enforce this Consent Agreement. In order to resolve this matter, I agree to comply with this Consent Agreement, consisting of four 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.

11-12-13
Date



Christopher M.N. Griffiths, D.V.M.

NOTARY

STATE OF Maryland

CITY/COUNTY OF Montgomery

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 12th day of November, 2013, before me, a Notary Public of the State and City/County aforesaid, personally appeared Christopher M.N. Griffiths, D.V.M., and made oath in due form of law that the foregoing Consent Agreement and Order was his voluntary act and deed.

AS WITNESS my hand and notarial seal.

Sharon A. Brennan
Notary Public

My Commission expires: 3/26/2014