

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

ADRIENNE EDWARDS, D.V.M.
LICENSE NO. 2894

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DOCKET NO. 21-38

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CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER

This Consent Agreement and Order ("Consent Agreement"), dated this 18th day of July 2022, is between the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners ("SBVME" or "Board") and Adrienne Edwards, D.V.M. ("Dr. Edwards"), License No. 2894. This Consent Agreement resolves a case arising from a complaint filed on December 20, 2020 with the SBVME in Docket No. 21-38, alleging that Dr. Edwards violated the Veterinary Practice Act, Md. Code Ann., Agric. §§ 2-301 – 2-316 and related Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR") 15.14.01 – 15.14.1, as set forth herein.

On June 3, 2022, Dr. Edwards, through her legal counsel, agreed to resolve this case under the terms and conditions reflected in this Consent Agreement. By signing this Consent Agreement, Dr. Edwards agrees to waive her right to a hearing on the charges in Docket No. 21-38 and further agrees to the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement. Prior to entering into this agreement, Dr. Edwards was informed regarding her due process rights, as set forth in Md. Code Ann., § 2-311.

Under Maryland law, the SBVME 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 the provisions of the Veterinary Practice Act and related COMAR regulations adopted pursuant to this law. As part of its authority, the SBVME "may refuse, suspend, or revoke any application or license, and censure or place on probation any licensee ... if the veterinarian ... [f]ails to comply with Board rules and regulations after receiving a license." Md. Code Ann., Agric. § 2-310(8). The Board may also 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. Agric. § 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 civil penalty standards. Md. Code Ann., State Gov't. § 10-1001(b); COMAR 15.14.11 (Civil Penalty Standards for Veterinarians).

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Adrienne Edwards, D.V.M., License Number 2894, by entering into and signing this Consent Agreement, having had the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel, agrees to the provisions of this Consent Agreement, acknowledging that the SBVME has sufficient evidence to find, as fact, and to conclude as a matter of law that Dr. Edwards did not satisfy COMAR 15.14.01.07 (Professional Judgment and Practice) as set forth herein:

1. Dr. Edwards is a veterinarian licensed to practice in Maryland, where she has been licensed since 1985. Dr. Edwards was, at the time of the events described herein, the responsible veterinarian at Banfield Pet Hospital 0433 ("Hospital") (License Number 08-010), located at 3041 Festival Way, Waldorf, MD 20601. Dr. Edwards has relevant disciplinary history with the Board that includes a consent agreement entered in Docket No. 09-55, in which Dr. Edwards was found to have provided substandard care to a dog and was assessed a civil penalty of \$250 and placed on probation for six months.
2. This case involves veterinary care and treatment provided to Cajin, an 11-year-old neutered Yorkshire Terrier owned by Talanta Parker ("Ms. Parker" or "Owner"). Cajin's primary veterinary facility was the Hospital.
3. On November 23, 2020, Ms. Parker took Cajin to the Hospital for lethargy and heavy breathing. BPH was very busy that day, and Ms. Parker waited approximately 20 minutes before a veterinary technician, Karmen McCollum ("Ms. McCollum"), came into the examination room to obtain Cajin's medical history. Ms. Parker told Ms. McCollum that Cajin was having trouble breathing after walking outside or using the stairs. Further, Ms. Parker stated that Cajin had not been eating or defecating for the past two days.

4. Dr. Edwards was Cajin's attending veterinarian. When Cajin arrived at the Hospital, Dr. Edwards was assisting another veterinarian in surgery, so she had Ms. McCollum obtain Cajin's medical history. When Dr. Edwards examined Cajin, he was shivering and trembling, so his respiratory rate and effort could not be thoroughly evaluated. Dr. Edwards stated that Cajin's abdomen was soft and non-painful, and she palpated gas and fluid-filled bowel loops. Further, Dr. Edwards performed a rectal exam and found soft feces and full anal glands.

5. Cajin had a complete blood count ("CBC"), and a chemistry and electrolyte panel was performed. According to Dr. Edwards, Cajin's bloodwork was "relatively normal, although his platelets were low." Dr. Edwards then asked Ms. McCollum to advise Cajin's physical exam findings and bloodwork results to Ms. Parker.

6. According to Ms. Parker, approximately 45 minutes later, Ms. McCollum told her that Cajin's bloodwork was fine, and that Dr. Edwards was discharging Cajin with a prescription diet and pain medications. Ms. Parker stated that she then requested to speak in person to Dr. Edwards, but Ms. McCollum told her that because of COVID-19, the veterinarians were limiting face-to-face interactions.

7. Subsequently, Dr. Edwards agreed to speak in person with Ms. Parker. Dr. Edwards told Ms. Parker that Cajin may have gastrointestinal discomfort causing his anal glands to become full and uncomfortable, "leading to strange behavior." Dr. Edwards told Ms. Parker that she could administer a Vitamin B-complex injection to Cajin to help stimulate Cajin's appetite. In a response provided to the Board, Dr. Edwards states that she offered to take radiographs of Cajin, but Ms. Parker declined. However, according to the Hospital's medical records, Dr. Edwards noted that "if appetite does not improve, recommend radiographs of abdomen."

8. Dr. Edwards administered Vitamin B-complex subcutaneous to Cajin and prescribed Rimadyl 25 mg for him. Cajin was then discharged.

9. According to Ms. Parker, Cajin would not eat later that evening, and she could not get Cajin to take his medication. At approximately 4 a.m., Cajin's breathing got worse, so she took him to Waldorf Emergency Care ("WEC") (License No. 08-00223).

10. According to WEC's medical records, upon presentation, Cajin was placed in the oxygen cage. Cajin had an increased respiratory effort with significant abdominal effort and soft rales (crackles) in all of the lung fields. The WEC attending veterinarian recommended chest radiographs, and Ms. Parker consented.

11. The WEC attending veterinarian submitted Cajin's chest radiographs to Idexx Diagnostics for review. The final report showed that Cajin had multiple pulmonary nodules and a patchy interstitial pattern in all the lung fields, suggestive of neoplasia. Further, another veterinarian at WEC performed an abdominal and thoracic ultrasound which showed a normal abdomen, however, there were multiple pulmonary nodules in Cajin's chest.

12. The WEC attending veterinarian recommended hospitalization, oxygen therapy, and intravenous fluids. However, he also noted that Cajin's prognosis was poor.

13. Ms. Parker consented to the treatment plan. An intravenous catheter was placed, and Cajin was started on intravenous fluids. Cerenia, Baytril, and doxycycline were administered to Cajin.

14. Ms. Parker later returned to WEC and elected to take Cajin home to spend time with him before having Cajin euthanized. After Cajin left WEC, he died on the car ride home.

15. On December 20, 2020, Ms. Parker submitted a complaint to the SBVME. In it, Ms. Parker expressed several concerns regarding the treatment that Cajin received on November 23, 2020, which included Dr. Edwards' failure to offer or recommend chest radiographs.

16. The Board opened a case and conducted an investigation. After considering all evidence presented, including Dr. Edwards's responses, the Board concluded that Dr. Edwards provided substandard care to Cajin.

17. COMAR 15.14.01.07A (Professional Judgment and Practice) provides that: "[a] veterinarian, when caring for and treating a patient, shall conform to those minimum standards of care and treatment which are customary among veterinarians in this State." Dr. Edwards failed to satisfy the applicable by not considering the Owner's complaints Cajin's labored breathing as part of her assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. The medical record does not reflect Dr. Edwards' assessment of Cajin's labored breathing, which was one of

the reasons for the visit. Given those complaints, the standard of care required that radiographs be offered as a diagnostic tool, but that does not appear to be done. Nothing in the medical record documented that chest radiographs were offered and/or declined by the Owner, and the Owner denies that such an offer was made. Although the standard of care required Dr. Edwards to at least offer radiographs, failure to perform imaging would not have changed the outcome of the case.

Taking the facts and circumstances into consideration, including the nature of the violation(s), the veterinarian's disciplinary history, her acceptance of responsibility and good faith cooperation in resolving this matter, the Board concluded that the most reasonable and appropriate resolution includes the sanctions set forth below.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 18th day of July, 2022, by the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, ORDERED that:

- (a) For violating COMAR 15.14.01.07 (Professional Judgment and Practice) in the care and treatment provided to Cajin, an 11-year-old neutered Yorkshire Terrier owned by Talanta Parker, Dr. Edwards is assessed a civil penalty of \$600;
- (b) Dr. Edwards shall pay the civil penalty within sixty (60) days from the date of this Consent Agreement by check payable to the Maryland Department of Agriculture ("MDA") with the notation "SBVME – 21-38" sent to the MDA at 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401;
- (c) As an additional requirement of this Consent Agreement, Dr. Edwards shall complete four hours of continuing education ("CE") in respiratory treatment and/or diagnostics. The CE proposed to be taken to satisfy this Consent Agreement shall be submitted to the Board, via email to the Board's Executive Director, Nathaniel Boan, in advance, for a determination that the proposed CE satisfies the terms of this Consent Agreement;

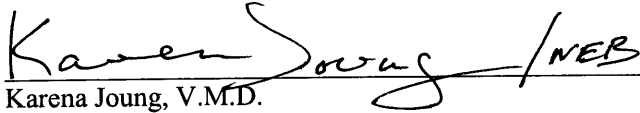
(d) CE shall be completed and verification of completion provided to the Board within sixty (60) days from the date of this Order. Verification should be sent by email to Nathaniel Boan, Executive Director, at nathaniel.boan@maryland.gov. Proof from the CE provider shall include the veterinarian's name, the number of hours of CE completed, the topics covered, and the date(s) the CE was given. This CE will not count toward the 18 credit hours required annually for re-registration of the veterinary license. To verify completion of the annual CE requirements and the CE required by this Consent Agreement, the Board may conduct an audit of the veterinarian's CE records for relevant years; and

(e) This Consent Agreement is a public order.

WITNESS the hand of the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, State of Maryland, this

10th day of July, 2022.

STATE BOARD OF VETERINARY
MEDICAL EXAMINERS

/NER

Karena Joung, V.M.D.

Vice-President

State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners
Maryland Department of Agriculture

CONSENT

I, Adrienne Edwards, D.V.M., acknowledge that I have had an opportunity to consult with counsel before entering into this Consent Agreement. By this Consent, I hereby acknowledge the legal authority and jurisdiction of the Board over this matter 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 7 pages, including this Consent. I sign this Consent Agreement without reservation as my voluntary act and deed after having had an opportunity to consult with counsel, and I acknowledge that I fully understand and comprehend the language, meaning, and terms of this Consent Agreement.

Date:

7/18/2022



Adrienne Edwards, D.V.M.

Total number
of pages = 7