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

IN THE MATTER OF:	*	
BRADFORD LEVORA, DVM License No. 3316	*	
	*	DOCKET NO. 23-111
Responsible Veterinarian for: LITTLE SENECA ANIMAL HOSPITAL 20630 Seneca Meadows Parkway Germantown, MD 20876 Hospital License No. 15-00597	*	
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CIVIL PENALTY FINAL ORDER

This Civil Penalty Final Order ("Order"), dated this 26th day of July, 2023, is issued by the Maryland State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners ("SBVME" or "Board") against Bradford LeVora ("Dr. LeVora") the former owner and responsible veterinarian of Little Seneca Animal Hospital (Old License No. 15-060) (LSAH #1) and current responsible veterinarian at Little Seneca Animal Hospital (New License No. 15-00507))("LSAH #2" or "Hospital"), located at 20630 Seneca Meadows Parkway, Germantown, MD 20876.

This Order confirms the intention of Dr. LeVora to waive the right to formal proceedings in this case, in which it is alleged that he violated the Maryland Veterinary Practice Act, Md. Code Ann., Agric. §§ 2-301 - 2-316 ("the Act") and related Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR") 15.14.01 – 15.14.17, as set forth herein.

Before agreeing to this Order, Dr. LeVora was notified in writing of the due process rights available to him, including the right to receive formal notice of charges, request a hearing, retain legal counsel, and all other rights as set forth in Agric. § 2-311. On July 22, 2023, Dr. LeVora informed Board counsel that he would waive its rights to formal charges and a hearing and agree to the entry of this Order.

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 and veterinary hospital owners charged with violating provisions of the Act. 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 hospital owner] . . .

[f]ails to comply with Board rules and regulations after receiving a license." Agric. § 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 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 violator's good faith, and any 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

Bradford LeVora, DVM, having the opportunity to seek the advice of legal counsel, voluntarily waives his right to formal charges and a hearing and agrees to pay a civil penalty of $1000. In so doing, Dr. LeVora acknowledges that the Board has sufficient evidence to find, as fact, and conclude as a matter of law that he violated COMAR 15.14.03.01-1 (Licensing Requirements), as follows:

1. Dr. LeVora is a veterinarian who has been licensed to practice in Maryland since 1987. Before August 2022, he was the owner and responsible veterinarian at LSAH #1, operated under License No. 15-060.

2. Dr. LeVora has a history of discipline by the Board which includes a Civil Penalty Final Order issued on September 16, 2014, in Docket No. 15-05, finding that he operated LSAH for about two months after a change in ownership without a valid veterinary hospital license. Dr. LeVora paid a $350 civil penalty for this violation.

3. On April 17, 2023, Board Inspector Peggy Morgan ("Inspector Morgan") visited LSAH's location in Germantown to perform a routine sanitation inspection.

4. During the inspection, Inspector Morgan learned from the hospital manager that Dr. LeVora had sold LSAH #1 to Heartland Veterinary Partners of Maryland, LLC ("Heartland") and that the hospital had been under new ownership since July 13, 2022.

5. Inspector Morgan informed the hospital manager that the facility's last inspection was on February 14, 2022. Under SBVME regulations, a hospital must have been inspected within the previous year to open under new ownership.

6. Inspector Morgan also advised the hospital manager that the SBVME had not been notified of the sale to Heartland, nor had Heartland applied for a new hospital license due to the change of ownership. Accordingly, as of the inspection date, LSAH did not have a valid hospital license and was not authorized to operate. Inspector Morgan

instructed the hospital manager to notify Dr. LeVora, the former owner and responsible veterinarian, and Heartland, the new owner, that LSAH was operating without a valid license and needed to submit a new license application as soon as possible.

7. As of April 20, 2023, the SBVME had not received a new hospital application for LSAH, so Inspector Morgan contacted the hospital manager again by telephone to remind her that because the hospital was continuing to operate without a valid license, the Board could shut the hospital down. Inspector Morgan instructed the manager to contact representatives of Heartland immediately to let them know that they needed to begin working on a hospital license application immediately.

8. Inspector Morgan also requested that Dr. LeVora email the Board to confirm the date the practice was sold to Heartland and whether he would continue as the responsible veterinarian for the hospital under Heartland's ownership.

9. Dr. LeVora complied with that request that day, informing the Board that the practice was sold to Heartland in July of 2022 and confirming that he would be the responsible veterinarian under the new ownership.

10. Later, on April 20, 2023, Heartland submitted a hospital application for LSAH #2, which was approved that afternoon.

11. Section 2-304.1 of the Agriculture Article, Md. Ann. Code, requires that every veterinary hospital be licensed by the Board. COMAR 15.14.03.01-1 specifies the process and requirements for licensing and operation of veterinary hospitals. COMAR 15.14.03.01-1C states, "[a] person, including the owner, may not operate a veterinary facility unless it has a veterinary hospital license." COMAR 15.14.03.01-1E provides that: "[b]ecause a hospital license is issued in the name of a particular owner for a particular building or portion of it, **the owner may not transfer this license to either a new owner, including a person leasing or purchasing the owner's veterinary practice, or a different physical structure**." (Emphasis added).

12. Dr. LeVora, as the owner who sold LSAH #1 on or about July 13, 2022, and the responsible veterinarian both before and after the change of ownership, violated this regulation by continuing to serve as the responsible veterinarian at LSAH for almost nine months after the sale without ensuring that a valid hospital license issued to the new owner had been obtained. This case involves Dr. LeVora's second offense for the same violation, which requires imposing a higher civil penalty.

Taking all facts and circumstances into consideration, including the nature of the violation, the veterinarian's prior discipline for the same offense, and his good faith effort to resolve this matter promptly, the Board concluded that the most reasonable and appropriate resolution in this matter was a civil penalty only.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 26th day of July, 2023, by the Maryland State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, **ORDERED** that for the violation of Md. Code Ann., Agric. § 2-304.1, and COMAR 15.14.03.01-1, Bradford LeVora, DVM (License No. 3316), the former owner and responsible veterinarian at Little Seneca Animal Hospital #1 operating under License No. 15-060, and the acting responsible veterinarian at the hospital after the sale and before a new hospital license for Little Seneca Animal Hospital #2 (License No. 15-00597) was issued, is assessed a civil penalty of $1000, due sixty (60) days from the date of this Order.

The civil penalty should be paid by check payable to the Maryland Department of Agriculture ("MDA") with the notation "SBVME – 23-111" and mailed to:

Maryland Department of Agriculture
State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners
Harry S. Truman Parkway, Room 102
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Attn: Nathaniel Boan

This Civil Penalty Final Order is a public document.

STATE BOARD OF VETERINARY
MEDICAL EXAMINERS



Elizabeth Callahan, DVM
President
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