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JAN 20 2015

DOCKET NO. 2015-089

Texas State Board
of Veterinary Medical Examiners

IN THE MATTER OF	§	TEXAS BOARD OF
THE LICENSE OF	§	VETERINARY
THOMAS SUTTON, D.V.M.	§	MEDICAL EXAMINERS

AGREED ORDER

On this the 27 day of Jan, 2015, came to be considered by the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners ("Board") the matter of the license of THOMAS SUTTON, D.V.M. ("Respondent"). Pursuant to Section 801.2056, Texas Occupations Code, a committee of the Board's staff met on December 4, 2014, to consider alleged violations of the Veterinary Licensing Act and the Board's rules by Respondent.

Respondent, without admitting the truth of the findings and conclusions set out in this Agreed Order, wishes to waive a conference under Section 801.2056 and thereby dispose of the compliance issues set out below. Respondent agrees to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in this Order. In waiving the right to a conference, Respondent acknowledges his understanding of the alleged violations and the adequacy and sufficiency of the notice mailed to him.

Upon the recommendation of the Staff Committee and with Respondent's consent, the Board makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and enters this Agreed Order as set forth below.

Findings of Fact

1. Respondent, THOMAS SUTTON, D.V.M. of Georgetown, Texas, holds Texas veterinary license 4385.
2. The Board has jurisdiction over the subject matter and Respondent. Respondent received notice, which may be required by law and by the rules of the Board. All jurisdictional requirements have been satisfied under Tex. Occ. Code Ann. Title 4 (Act). By entering into this Agreed Order, Respondent waives any defect in the notice and any further right to notice and hearing under the Act; Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §§ 2001.051-.054; and the Rules of the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (Board Rules) (22 Tex. Admin. Code, Chapter 575).
3. On February 26, 2014, Derek Hawke's mother present his male, chocolate seal point Siamese cat to Hometown Animal Care (the "Clinic"), which Respondent owns. Mr. Hawke was

not satisfied with the services provided at the Clinic and submitted a review of his experience on the Clinic's "Yelp" business website.

4. On April 25, 2014, Respondent responded to Mr. Hawke's review on-line and through an email to the public. In his response, Respondent included Mr. Hawke's first and last name, details from the cat's medical records, and allegations of long term abuse and neglect. Mr. Hawke disputes such allegations of abuse and neglect.

Conclusions of Law

1. Respondent is required to comply with the provisions of the Veterinary Licensing Act, Chapter 801, Texas Occupations Code, and with the Board's Rules.

2. Based on the above paragraphs, Respondent has violated Rule 573.28, OBSERVANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY, of the Board's Rules of Professional Conduct, by detailing a patient's medical issues and treatments.

3. Based on the above paragraphs, Respondent has violated Section 801.353(a) of the Veterinary Licensing Act, Texas Occupations Code by violating the confidential relationship between the veterinarian and his client.

4. Based on Conclusions of Law 1 through 3, Respondent has violated Section 801.402 (4) and (6) of the Veterinary Licensing Act, Texas Occupations Code, and is subject to disciplinary action by the Board:

801.402. GENERAL GROUNDS FOR LICENSE DENIAL OR DISCIPLINARY ACTION. A person is subject to denial of a license or to disciplinary action under Section 801.401 if the person:

(4) engages in dishonest or illegal practices in, or connected with, the practice of veterinary medicine or the practice of equine dentistry; ...

(6) engages in practices or conduct that violates the board's rules of professional conduct.

5. Based on Conclusions of Law 1 through 4, Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under Section 801.401 of the Veterinary Licensing Act, Texas Occupations Code:

801.401. DISCIPLINARY POWERS OF BOARD. (a) If an applicant or license holder is subject to denial of a license or to disciplinary action under Section 801.402, the Board may: (a)

(1) refuse to examine an applicant or to issue or renew a license;

- (2) revoke or suspend a license;
- (3) place on probation a license holder or person whose license has been suspended;
- (4) reprimand a license holder; or
- (5) impose an administrative penalty.

.... (d) In addition to other disciplinary actions authorized by this subchapter, the board may require a license holder who violates this chapter to participate in a continuing education program.

6. Based on Conclusions of Law 2 through 5, Respondent may be disciplined in the manner set out in Section 801.451, IMPOSITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY, of the Veterinary Licensing Act, which authorizes an administrative penalty for violations of the Act and Board rules.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD AND RESPONDENT AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

Based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Board ORDERS that Respondent receive a FORMAL REPRIMAND.

The Board ORDERS that Respondent pay, within 45 days of the date the Board approves this Order, an ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY of FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$500.00). If Respondent fails to pay the administrative penalty within 45 days of the date the Board approves this Agreed Order, Respondent's license may be suspended until the penalty is paid.

The Board further ORDERS that:

1. Respondent shall abide by the Rules of Professional Conduct, the Texas Veterinary Licensing Act, and the laws of the State of Texas and the United States.
2. Respondent shall cooperate with the Board's attorneys, investigators, compliance officers and other employees and agents investigating Respondent's compliance with this Agreed Order.
3. Failure by Respondent to comply with the terms of this Agreed Order or with any other provisions of the Licensing Act or the Board Rules, may result in further disciplinary action.

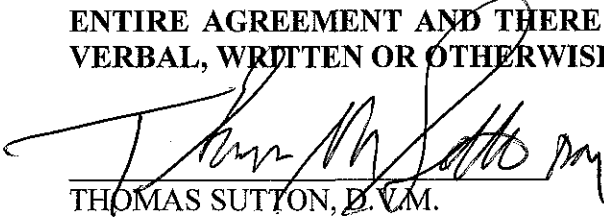
Respondent, by signing this Agreed Order, acknowledges his understanding of the Agreed Order, the notice, and Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law set forth herein, and agrees that he will satisfactorily comply with the mandates of the Agreed Order in a timely manner or be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the Board.

Respondent, by signing this Agreed Order, waives his right to a formal hearing and any right to seek judicial review of this Agreed Order. Respondent acknowledges that he had the right to be represented by legal counsel in this matter.

RESPONDENT WAIVES ANY FURTHER HEARINGS OR APPEALS TO THE BOARD OR TO ANY COURT IN REGARD TO ALL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS AGREED ORDER. RESPONDENT AGREES THAT THIS IS A FINAL ORDER.

The effective date of this Agreed Order shall be the date it is adopted by the Board.

I, THOMAS SUTTON, D.V.M., HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE FOREGOING AGREED ORDER. I UNDERSTAND BY SIGNING IT, I WAIVE CERTAIN RIGHTS. I SIGN IT VOLUNTARILY. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS ORDER CONTAINS THE ENTIRE AGREEMENT AND THERE IS NO OTHER AGREEMENT OF ANY KIND, VERBAL, WRITTEN OR OTHERWISE.


THOMAS SUTTON, D.V.M.


1/16/15
DATE

STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTY OF Williamson §

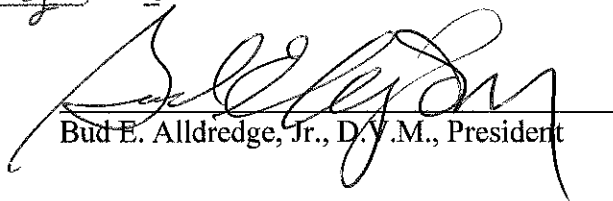
BEFORE ME, on this day, personally appeared THOMAS SUTTON, D.V.M., known to me as the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing document, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes stated therein.

Given under the hand and seal of office this 16th day of January, 2015.




Notary Public

SIGNED AND ENTERED by the TEXAS BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS on this the 27 January, 2015


Bud E. Alldredge, Jr., D.V.M., President