

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF  
SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**COMPLAINT NO. 2020-97**

**JESSICA NICHOLS**

**REGISTRATION NO. 15824**

**CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER**


**WHEREAS**, Jessica Nichols (“Ms. Nichols”) is a credentialed social worker subject to the jurisdiction and rules and regulations of the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”);

**WHEREAS**, the Board received a complaint filed by Michael McNeil on November 12, 2019, wherein he alleged that Ms. Nichols presented herself as a social worker when she was not credentialed with the Board, saw clients and then abandoned them without notice, and worked for other agencies without being credentialed by the Board;

**WHEREAS**, by letter dated November 25, 2019, the Board notified Ms. Nichols of the complaint filed against her, provided Ms. Nichols with a summary of the nature of the complaint, and requested that Ms. Nichols, within fifteen (15) days, provide a written response giving her review of the allegations raised in the complaint;

**WHEREAS**, by correspondence dated December 6, 2019, Ms. Nichols responded to the complaint filed by Mr. McNeil, generally denying the allegations contained therein;

**WHEREAS**, by letter dated August 7, 2020, the Board sent a letter to Ms. Nichols, advising her that the possible violations previously identified in the original notice letter to her was being amended to include La. R.S. 37:2717(A)(3);

Jessica Nichols #2020-97  
Initial:   
2323403.v1

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the complaint and administrative investigation, Ms. Nichols has indicated her desire to resolve this matter through a Consent Agreement and Order as provided for in Rule No. 907 of the Board's Rules, Standards and Procedures and La. R.S. 49:955(D) of the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act;

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Nichols has admitted the following:

1. Ms. Nichols is a Registered Social Worker ("RSW"), credentialed by the Board to engage in the practice of social work in the State of Louisiana pursuant to the Social Work Practice Act, La. R.S. 37:2701 *et seq.*, as evidenced by Registration No. 15824.
2. At the time of the facts and matters alleged herein, Ms. Nichols was engaged in the practice of social work through her employment with ABC Case Management from May 30, 2017 through April 25, 2019.
3. Ms. Nichols was awarded a bachelor's degree in social work on May 13, 2017.
4. Ms. Nichols was issued a RSW registration by the Board on January 17, 2020.

**WHEREAS**, by practicing social work without a social work credential, Ms. Nichols violated La. R.S. 37:2709(A).

**WHEREAS**, undersigned counsel has confirmed the respondent's desire to resolve this matter through a Consent Agreement and Order;

**WHEREAS**, the Respondent, Ms. Nichols, agrees not to repeat the misconduct mentioned in this Consent Agreement and Order, and acknowledges that any further misconduct mentioned in this Consent Agreement and Order will be considered a violation of the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order and shall be cause for further disciplinary action;

**WHEREAS**, Respondent, Ms. Nichols, recognizes her right to have an administrative adjudication of the charges outlined in the complaint and notice letter, at which time Ms. Nichols would be entitled to be represented by legal counsel, to call witnesses, and to present witnesses on her behalf in defense or in mitigation of the charges made, and to a decision thereon by the Board based upon written findings of fact and conclusions of law in accordance with the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act. Ms. Nichols nonetheless waives her right to formal adjudication and, pursuant to La. R.S. 49:955(D), consents to the entry of the Consent Agreement and Order set forth hereinafter. Ms. Nichols also acknowledges that she waives any rights to which she may be entitled pursuant to the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act, La. R.S. 49:951, et seq., or which she otherwise may be afforded by any law, to contest her agreement to, or the force and effect of this Consent Agreement and Order, in any Court or other forum.

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that in consideration of the foregoing and pursuant to the authority vested in the Board by La. R.S. 49:955(D), the Board orders and Ms. Nichols accepts the following administrative action, which is a final decision pursuant to La. R.S. 49:958:

1. Ms. Nichols shall pass the Board's Open Book Examination on the Social Work Practice Act and Rules, Standards & Procedures within twelve (12) months after the date that all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order.
2. Ms. Nichols shall complete a total of twelve (12) hours of continuing education on the subject of social work ethics. These hours are to be pre-approved by the Board prior to completion. This continuing education is in addition to the annual hours of continuing education required to maintain her RSW. Ms. Nichols shall provide the Board with

evidence of attendance within twelve (12) months after all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order.

3. Ms. Nichols shall pay a fine in the amount of five hundred dollars and 00/100 (\$500.00) within twelve (12) months from the date all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order. The payments shall be made on a quarterly basis with the first payment being due within ninety (90) days from the date all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order. The payments shall be made by credit card, certified check or money order.
4. Ms. Nichols shall pay all legal costs associated with Complaint No. 2020-97 in the amount of four hundred fifty dollars and 00/100 (\$450.00) within twelve (12) months after the date all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order. The payments shall be made on a quarterly basis with the first payment due within ninety (90) days from the date all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order. The payments shall be made by credit card, certified check or money order.
5. Ms. Nichols specifically acknowledges that failure to comply with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order may result in a denial, revocation, or suspension of any license, certificate, or registration issued by, or applied for, in accordance with La. R.S. 37:2717.
6. Ms. Nichols shall report the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order to any board or agency located in the United States with which she is licensed or registered.
7. By agreeing to the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order, Ms. Nichols waives all rights to appeal this adjudication.

**Effect of Non Acceptance of Agreement.** Ms. Nichols acknowledges that this Consent Agreement and Order is subject to the approval of the Board. She further acknowledges and agrees that if the Board rejects this Consent Agreement and Order, it will be void, and an Administrative Complaint may be filed relative to the allegations contained herein. If this Consent Agreement and Order is rejected by the Board, it will not constitute a waiver of Ms. Nichol's right to a hearing on the matters alleged in an Administrative Complaint and the admissions contained herein will have no effect. She further agrees that if the Board rejects this Consent Agreement and Order, the members of the Board may decide the matter after a hearing, and their consideration of this Consent Agreement and Order shall not alone be grounds for recusal of any member of the Board, including any claims that the Board is biased against her, that it cannot fairly decide the case, or that it has received ex parte communication.

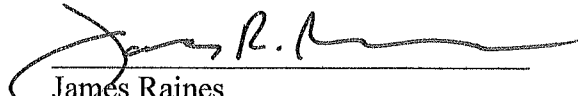
**Address of Board.** All payments ordered and any reports required by this Consent Agreement and Order shall be addressed to Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners, 18550 Highland Road, Suite B, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809.

**IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED** that this Consent Agreement and Order shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the Board and is a public record of the Board. The terms of this Consent Agreement and Order shall be published and reported in, including but not limited to, the LABSWE website, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), and the National Practitioner Data Bank-Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (NPDB-HIPDB).

REMAINDER OF PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

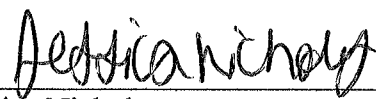
The prosecutor acknowledges negotiation and preparation of this Consent Agreement and Order in order to resolve, with prejudice, all matters for which the social worker could be charged under Complaint 2020-97, and further certifies that this Consent Agreement and Order is consistent with the evidence, adequately addresses the complaint, and represents a true and correct statement of that which could be proven at a hearing of this matter.

DATED: 2/21/22

  
James Raines  
Prosecutor

I, Jessica Nichols, have read the Consent Agreement and Order, understand it, and agree to be bound by its terms and conditions. I specifically acknowledge that failure to comply with the terms of the Consent Agreement and Order may result in revocation or suspension of my license. The admissions contained herein will be considered proven and the only issue will be failure to follow the terms of the Consent Agreement and Order. I make these acknowledgements and waivers in support of a final disposition of the pending investigation of Complaint No. 2020-97 by Consent Agreement and Order pursuant to La. R.S. 49:955(D), in lieu of the institution and prosecution of formal administrative proceedings, and accordingly consent to the entirety of the Order set forth above and further waive any right to which I may be entitled under the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act or any other law to contest, in any court, my agreement to this Order. By my subscription hereto, I also hereby authorize the Prosecutor to present this Order to the LABSWE for its consideration and to disclose to and discuss with the LABSWE the nature and results of the investigation of this matter. I herein waive any objection to such disclosure based on due process of law under either the State or Federal Constitution or under State statutory law, including La. R.S. 49:960. I expressly acknowledge that the disclosure of such information to the LABSWE shall be without prejudice to the Prosecutor's authority to file a formal Administrative Complaint, or the LABSWE's capacity to adjudicate such Administrative Complaint, should the LABSWE decline to approve this Consent Agreement and Order. I further acknowledge my awareness that should the LABSWE approve this Consent Agreement and Order that the Consent Agreement and Order will become a matter of public record.

DATED: 7/14/2022

  
Jessica Nichols

**ORDER**

The Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners, having examined the Consent Agreement and Order, Case No. 2020-97, adopted the Consent Agreement and Order in this matter.

DATED this 29<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2022 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

Jamie Barney, DSW, LCSW-BACS  
Jamie Barney, LCSW-BACS

Evan Bergeron, Esq., Consumer Member

Hyacinth McKee, LCSW-BACS  
Hyacinth McKee, LCSW-BACS

Carla Moore, LMSW  
Carla Moore, LMSW

Trinity George, MS, RSW  
~~Ada Nelson, RSW~~ Trinity George, RSW

Bora Sunseri, LCSW-BACS  
Bora Sunseri, LCSW-BACS

Ruth Weinzettle, LCSW-BACS  
Ruth Weinzettle, LCSW-BACS