

June 17, 2019

State of Maine
Board of Osteopathic Licensure
Attn: Nikolette Alexander, Investigative Secretary
161 Capitol Street
142 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0142

RE: Complaint of Gina Turcotte against Julia McDonald, D.O.
CR 2019-11

Dear Board Members:

I am replying to Dr. Julia McDonald's response to my complaint. It is true that Dr. McDonald and I spoke about the "delusional disorder" diagnosis in August 2016 at which time I believed, based on our conversation, that the entries would be removed and not repeated.

When I received my medical records in February 2019, I discovered Dr. McDonald made more entries after my discussion with her in August 2016. I spoke with her again in March 2019 about removing those entries which she said she would do; however, when I received my updated medical records in early April 2019 and I reviewed them thoroughly, I discovered previous entries I was not aware of and which had not been removed.

I contacted FMI Medical Director Dr. John Barnes at least twice requesting all entries be removed, which he denied and referred me to the Patient Advocate. After completing the process with the Patient Advocate office and receiving Dr. McDonald's response, I filed this complaint.

I have been a patient at Family Medicine Institute since it opened in 1973, as well as receiving prenatal and birthing care for my daughter in January 1988. I was seen by Dr. James Schneid exclusively starting in January 1988 until he left Family Medicine Institute around 2011 which, to my great dismay, required a new doctor be assigned to me. This is how I ultimately came to be seen by Dr. Julia McDonald on January 5, 2015 after being shuffled between other FMI doctors.

Dr. McDonald was eventually assigned to me after I requested a new doctor because of my difference of opinion with Dr. Jose Ventura during 2013 about the course of my medical treatment. Unbeknownst to me, Dr. Ventura made notes in my records about "delusions" and "delusional disorder" which Dr. McDonald then carried forward and repeated beginning with our first visit in January 2015.

It is critical for the Board to consider the fact that **I was seen by Dr. James Schneid exclusively for 23 years but it was Dr. Ventura, upon my first visit with him in 2013, who made the first entry in my records that I allegedly exhibited “delusions”** even though Dr. Ventura had no personal knowledge of my baseline, medical history or private life.

Had Dr. Ventura never made notes about “delusions” and “delusional disorder”, Dr. McDonald would not have been alerted or had a basis to carry them forward and enforce them which Dr. McDonald did for different reasons than Dr. Ventura’s reasons. Dr. Ventura’s assessment was based on his opinion that I was irrationally argumentative about unfamiliar topics in healthcare, environmental pollution, politics and law. Dr. McDonald’s assessment was based on my interest in the investigative medical sciences of dental regeneration.

Because of Dr. Ventura’s initial assessment that I was exhibiting “delusions”, Dr. McDonald consequentially assessed me to also be exhibiting “delusions” which then caused her to distrust everything I said to her and caused her to treat me like someone who was suffering delusions.

Consequently, Dr. McDonald picked up where Dr. Ventura left off, carrying forward and enforcing prior incorrect assessments of “delusions” and “delusional disorder” without having any personal knowledge of my baseline, medical history or private life.

As Dr. McDonald’s response says, *“Knowing that she had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and was refusing treatment, I made a note of the fact that Ms. Turcotte was exhibiting signs of mania with delusions during this visit.”*

Dr. McDonald’s response clearly expresses her professional opinion about my mental health beginning with her very first interaction with me:

“I discussed mental health treatment with Ms. Turcotte on January 5, and I documented that she refused interventions at that time. As she did not appear to be a danger to herself or others, there was nothing more I could do in terms of getting her to see a psychiatrist. Moreover, my notation about her ‘baseline’ referred not just to her signs of mania with delusions, but also to the fact that she was declining interventions, yet did not appear to be in danger of harming herself or others.”

Dr. McDonald incorrectly assumed and concluded I was refusing psychiatric medication and therapy **against medical advice** which prejudiced her clinical assessment. She never asked about my prior mental health treatment or any medication I had been prescribed by a licensed psychiatrist and the reason for their termination.

Dr. McDonald improperly depreciated my integrity and made permanent notes in my medical records about her opinion based on her inaccurate clinical assessment that I

was exhibiting untreated symptoms of mania with delusions. All subsequent visits with Dr. McDonald were significantly influenced and distorted by her ill-formed medical opinion created during our first visit in January 2015.

For purposes of background information, I was chronically homeless starting March 2012 until it stabilized in September 2016. After I started living in a mold polluted house in November 2014, I started experiencing severe and rapid tooth decay and have not been able to find a curative solution by allopathic doctors and dentists. Dr. McDonald and all other doctors and dentists have given me no options other than full mouth teeth extractions. Dr. McDonald's response did not mention the numerous conversations we have had about future infections, jawbone loss, severe weight loss and malnutrition being some of my main reasons preventing me from following through with the extractions.

I told Dr. McDonald that Mainecare told me they refuse to pay for dentures because they said my health was not sufficiently harmed to justify the government to pay for full dentures. Mainecare told me I am now required to have all of my teeth extracted before I will be allowed to file a new request for Mainecare authorization for full dentures, which will take several months to obtain, if Mainecare approves my application at all. I told Dr. McDonald that, in the meantime, I will be forced to survive without any teeth whatsoever which will impact my health in unknown serious ways with unknown serious results including but not limited to possible infections, severe weight loss and malnutrition.

In my effort to find a cause and curative solution for my tooth decay, I searched for recent clinical research and, in November 2017, I traveled to Boston Massachusetts where I consulted with doctors at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in their dental research program where they are conducting regenerative dental research. Tufts University doctors told me they have successfully regrown adult teeth in the mouths of rats but have not yet received FDA approval to conduct any human clinical trials for the same purpose. See: <https://now.tufts.edu/articles/promise-growing-new-teeth>

Dr. McDonald's response says "*I worry about continued weight loss and risk of infection for Ms. Turcotte, so long as her teeth remain untreated*", but she failed to clarify that losing the rest of my teeth and being forced to live without any teeth for several months will more definitively cause "*continued weight loss*" and other health problems more so than the risks posed by keeping my remaining teeth. Either way, Mainecare refuses to pay for full dentures until my health worsens due to my teeth, and I don't have \$2000 or more to pay for them myself.

Dr. McDonald's response says, "*She continued to believe that dental regeneration was possible, but acknowledged that it was outside of the mainstream biomedical understanding... Although I understand Ms. Turcotte's frustration and disagreement with my opinions, in my judgment, her beliefs regarding the possibility of tooth regeneration represent delusional thinking.*"

My trust in a proven yet mysterious medical fact and my acknowledgement that the fact is outside of the mainstream biomedical understanding is not sufficient grounds for concluding that I was showing symptoms of "delusional thinking". By Dr. McDonald's standards, all patients who believe in experimental medical science and who delay traditional medical treatment in favor of the possibility of benefiting from experimental medical treatment would also be labeled as having "delusional thinking".

Dr. McDonald has given more weight to her professional opinion which is based on her refusal to accept medical science than she does to medical science itself and thereby burdened me with a lifetime label of having "delusional thinking" because of my trust and faith in successful medical science experiments.

Our difference of opinion about experimental medical research and the course of my medical treatment does not form a proper basis for Dr. McDonald's clinical assessment that I was exhibiting signs of "delusional thinking". At no time did Dr. McDonald conduct any type of moderate or in-depth psychiatric evaluation of my mental status.

It was not just that Dr. McDonald was not straightforward and honest with me, but she didn't even give me the benefit of any doubts about my mental health. She automatically and unilaterally decided I was experiencing bipolar mania with delusions after conducting an "*incomplete ... mental health assessment*" without asking pertinent questions about my prior mental health treatment, consulting with my last psychiatrist or requesting any new psychiatric evaluations and testing. Dr. McDonald behaved like a psychiatrist without having proper licensing or training.

Now, I am burdened to carry the damaging weight of Dr. McDonald's ill-formed medical opinion for the rest of my life and be subject to the actions of people who will use Dr. McDonald's characterizations and medical notes against me.

Dr. McDonald's carrying forward Dr. Ventura's clinical assessment of delusions without asking me any questions, erroneously devaluing my character and repeating an incorrect and improper psychiatric assessment and diagnosis is exactly the actions I will suffer by future doctors as long as any mention of delusions exist in my records.

I trust the Board will see how damaging Dr. McDonald's notes and diagnosis has already been to me personally and will be to me in the future and the Board will take all appropriate and lawful steps to remedy this situation.

Respectfully,



Gina Turcotte
4 Caswell Road
Windsor, Maine 04363