

June 14, 2019

State of Maine
Board of Licensure in Medicine
Attn: Nikolette Alexander, Investigative Secretary
161 Capitol Street
137 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0137

RE: Complaint of Gina Turcotte against Jose Ventura, M.D.
CR 2019-65

Dear Board Members:

I am replying to Dr. Jose Ventura's response to my complaint. Dr. Ventura's response says he has very little recollection of our office visits; as I do recall those visits, I will clarify our interactions and other critical information for the record.

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 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. Jose Ventura after being shuffled between other FMI doctors.

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 signs of “delusions”** even though Dr. Ventura had no personal knowledge of my baseline, medical history or private life.

Upon my first office visit with Dr. Ventura in April 2013, I noticed we had a substantial difference of opinion about the course of my medical treatment which was based on Dr. Ventura's unawareness about my medical history and private life. Because of our ongoing difference of opinion, I eventually requested and received a new doctor and was eventually seen by Dr. Julia McDonald in January 2015.

Because Dr. Ventura did not know my last psychiatrist in August 2006 agreed to terminate all mental health medications, Dr. Ventura wrongly presumed I was refusing medication and psychotherapy against medical advice and that I was experiencing bipolar symptoms that needed to be treated.

Dr. Ventura's note incorrectly implies that I exhibited symptoms of bipolar disorder even though he had never met me before April 2013 so he had no personal knowledge of my baseline, he did not know critical details of my private life at that time and he did not request any type of mental health evaluation or testing by a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist.

During my visits with Dr. Ventura, he was unaware that my anxiety level was caused by my homelessness for a year beginning March 2012 and I was once again facing homelessness in August 2013. If Dr. Ventura had inquired about my private life, he would have discovered my housing issues caused my noticeably increased anxiety levels, heightened political interests and my decision to create a nonprofit agency.

I rejected Dr. Ventura's suggestion that I use painkillers because I didn't want to rely on opioids or any other pills to relieve my back pain and ultimately damage my life rather than improve it. I explained to Dr. Ventura that OMT was not a practical on-demand at-home remedy; however, I have received physical therapy since 2013 which has taught me how to successfully relieve my back pain on-demand at home by using certain stretching techniques.

Dr. Ventura failed to mention that my medical records show, in 2011, two heavy metal urinalyses which showed strontium, cadmium, barium, mercury, aluminum and other heavy metals in my urine. My request in 2013 was simply my attempt to verify that those levels had decreased despite their unknown cause (which I was still investigating in 2013).

Finally, to clarify Dr. Ventura's confusion about so-called "mind techniques" I've used to alleviate extreme distress caused by my housing situations, the term I used was "Cognitive Behavioral Therapy" which helped me to become aware of negative thinking so I could learn how to overcome stressful situations in a more effective way. See: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/cognitive-behavioral-therapy/about/pac-20384610>

Dr. Ventura's use of the term "mind techniques", when I used the term "Cognitive Behavioral Therapy", illustrates Dr. Ventura's lack of understanding of mental health techniques to assist me with any stress-related emotions that arise.

Dr. Ventura claims "*diagnosing Ms. Turcotte with a delusional disorder [is] not outside [the] scope of practice*" as a family medicine doctor. However, I disagree because it is medically improper, and illegal, for a doctor without proper mental health training and licensing to diagnose anyone with a rare "delusional disorder", or any mental health disorder, without first making proper background inquiries, psychiatry referrals and proper psychiatry evaluations. Finally, the psychiatrist would make the official diagnosis, not Dr. Ventura.

Although Dr. Ventura says his note about "delusions" was more of an observation of my behavior, not a 'diagnosis' per se, Dr. Ventura's note was based on his lack of critical details of my medical history and certain events happening in my life at that time which were the direct cause of my visible behaviors and which were successfully resolved once my housing was stabilized.

Dr. Ventura says he does not feel my medical records would be accurate if there was no reference to his assessment of "delusional" symptoms. In fact, my current records are inaccurate because of Dr. Ventura's misleading notes that were based on a lack of critical information.

Frankly, Dr. Ventura's ignorance about my life does not make me delusional.

Now, my permanent medical records have more than a dozen entries by both Drs. Jose Ventura and Julia McDonald about my exhibiting signs of "delusions" and having a "delusional disorder". **As Dr. Ventura said, he is "not sure how, if at all, [he] could remove 'delusional disorder' from the assessment list".**

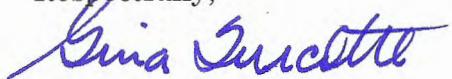
As long as the terms "delusions" and "delusional disorder" exist anywhere in my records, any future doctor can use them as elements of their clinical assessment of my mental health without considering the events of my life during that time. Everyone who sees those entries will instantly doubt my integrity and will treat me as though the "delusional" diagnosis was correct without asking me any questions.

Because of the permanent entries made by Dr. Ventura, his marking those entries about "delusions" and "delusional disorder" as "resolved" does not prevent future doctors from reassessing or re-certifying that "delusions" have resurfaced.

My medical records will now carry permanent clinical notes for the rest of my life about my exhibiting symptoms of "delusions" and I will suffer the consequences of the actions of people who will exploit those characterizations to use against me.

In closing, I trust the Board will see that Dr. Ventura's misinterpretation and mischaracterization of my "condition" was caused by ineffective communication and has been and will always be detrimental to me personally.

Respectfully,



Gina Turcotte
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Windsor, Maine 04363