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Health News Florida

Psychologist settles sex complaint

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St. Petersburg psychologist Ronald Droz, accused of conducting a long-term sexual relationship with one of his patients, has been placed on probation by the Florida Board of Psychology.

The patient, described in the Department of Health's administrative complaint only by her initials LK, had gone to Droz initially in July 1998 with her husband seeking marriage counseling. After two sessions, the complaint says, the husband stopped going, but LK continued until October 1999.

After that, according to the complaint, LK and Droz had periodic contact by telephone and, in spring 2003, at Salvation Army Correctional Services, where both were working.

The state's complaint says that Droz continued having sex with LK until 2007; Droz denied ever having sex with LK but agreed in the settlement that he had failed to keep appropriate therapist-patient boundaries.

It is a violation of state law for a medical doctor, psychologist or other health professional who is in a position of authority over a patient to engage in sexual conduct.

The settlement, negotiated by DOH prosecutors and Droz's attorney Peter Meros, calls for a reprimand, one year probation, payment of a \$4,000 fine and \$7,100 in costs, and continuing education courses. Psychologist Vincent Slonim has agreed to serve as Droz's supervisor during probation, according to the final order.

The case was decided last month by the Florida Board of Psychology.