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Ex-caseworker fined \$4,500 for giving pills, porn to Maine inmate

The Hallowell woman admits smuggling contraband into the Maine State Prison and says she will seek therapy.

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AUGUSTA — Smuggling suboxone, pornographic DVDs and nude photos of herself into the Maine State Prison cost a former social worker from Hallowell a \$4,500 fine, a public reprimand and a warning that her license would have been revoked had it not already expired.

The Maine Board of Social Worker Licensure sanctioned Jaime Dale Semple Harnett, 34, for ethics code violations after a hearing last month. No criminal charges were brought.

The decision described Harnett as a dedicated and occasionally exceptional employee from 2001, when she was hired as a social worker at the Maine State Prison, until about June 2009, when she developed a personal relationship with a prisoner on her caseload, identified only as "D" and serving 25 years for murder.

"The relationship progressed to the point where Ms. Harnett, from December 2009 to May 2010, voluntarily smuggled into the prison and delivered to 'D' 10 illegally obtained suboxone pills on two separate occasions, despite having knowledge that 'D' had intermittently struggled with drug addiction ... Harnett also smuggled and delivered to 'D' other contraband including 10 DVDs containing pornographic scenes (each valued at an estimated \$100), and a cellphone containing nude pictures of (herself)."

Board of Social Worker Licensure records show Harnett expressed remorse and said she committed the acts after the suicide of a fellow prison worker who had been her mentor and in the wake of her divorce.

The board decision, however, also notes that Harnett remains in contact with 'D' and visited him in April in prison in New Hampshire, where he was transferred.

The decision also says that the prisoner "spent time in solitary confinement after being caught with the above-noted contraband."

The complaint against Harnett was brought by Leida Dardis, deputy warden of the Maine State Prison in Warren, who indicated the prison was not planning to prosecute Harnett but brought the complaint because "we believe her misconduct was egregious, threatened the

security of staff and prisoners and consequently warrants a Social Work Board of Licensure review of her license."

Harnett resigned as a prison correctional caseworker on June 1, 2010. Her social worker license expired on Aug. 31, 2010.

In a handwritten note, Harnett admits writing to the prisoner – Dardis said Harnett used the pseudonym "Wendy Darling" – but denies having any physical contact with him.

"I realize that I have violated boundaries and ethical standards set by the social work board," she wrote to the board. "I will seek therapy when I am eligible for benefits with my present employer to address the issues I need to work on both personally and professionally."

Harnett is working at a job that does not require a license as a social worker. She declined comment.

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