

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Respected Executive Director Joe Trolian Unjustly Terminated by Richland County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board**

Mansfield, OH – Recent events surrounding Joe Trolian, the respected Executive Director of Richland County Mental Health and Recovery Services (MHRS), have cast a spotlight on what appears to be a series of unjust and politically motivated accusations that appeared to stem from an executive session between the Richland County Commissioners, County Administrator, and the MHRS Board of Directors. After two decades of unwavering service to the community, Trolian finds himself facing vague and unspecific charges that not only challenge his integrity but also the ethical compass of the Board.

On October 31, 2023, the Board issued charges against Joe under ORC 2921.42(A)(1) and (4) and the incorrectly cited "Ohio Ethics Law 102.03." This move is both legally and ethically questionable. Firstly, Trolian has not been criminally charged or convicted, making the application of a criminal statute not only inappropriate but alarmingly misleading. Furthermore, the Board's inability to specify the sections of the alleged violations under ORC 102.03, a statute with 25 diverse sections, raises significant concerns about the legitimacy and clarity of these accusations.

The haste and lack of transparency in the process have been equally troubling. Trolian was placed on paid administrative leave on November 1, 2023, and given less than a week to prepare for a hearing, with no concrete evidence or details of the alleged neglect of duty provided. This lack of information has led to a reliance on speculative and damaging media reports, causing undue personal and professional harm to Trolian and his family.

The charges themselves are unfounded and reflect a misunderstanding of both Trolian's role and the workings of MHRS. The allegation involving his wife, Christy Ellis-Trolian, ignores the fact that she is an independent contractor, not an employee, of The Change Companies, the publisher of the ASAM Criteria (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), and was the only trainer of Train for Change/The Change Companies that resides in Ohio. The funding for the ASAM Criteria trainings was authorized by Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and further approved by the Richland County MHRS Board. Similarly, the sponsorship of an ad in a school musical production was a Board-approved decision, where Trolian had no personal gain or undue influence.

The involvement with JW Consulting also does not stand up to scrutiny. Trolian's role in this instance was peripheral and non-influential. It is clear that the Board's actions and accusations are not only groundless but seem to be driven by ulterior motives, possibly of a political nature.

Joe Trolian has been a pillar of the Richland County community, dedicating 20 years to Richland County Mental Health and Recovery Services, including 16 as its Executive Director. Under his leadership, the agency has seen significant growth in funding and community engagement. The current treatment by the Board is not just a disservice to Trolian but a disheartening message to a man who has given so much to Richland County.

The situation calls for a fair and transparent evaluation of these accusations, free from political bias and hidden agendas. It is important to approach this matter with an objective view, recognizing Trolian's long-standing commitment to the county and ensuring that any assessments are based on facts and fairness.

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