STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
CHILD CARE LICENSING BUREAU

In the matter of

License #: DG410399528
SIR #: 2023DG0604003

Ericka and Thomas Cronkright

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ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION
AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REVOKE LICENSE

The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, by Division Director Erika Bigelow and Bureau Director Emily Laidlaw, Child Care Licensing Bureau, hereafter referred to as "the Bureau," orders the summary suspension and provides notice of the intent to revoke the license of Licensees, Ericka and Thomas Cronkright, to operate a group child care home pursuant to the authority of the Child Care Organizations Act, 1973 PA 116, as amended, MCL 722.111 et seq., for the following reasons:

1. On or about June 21, 2020, Licensees were issued a license to operate a group child care home with a licensed capacity of 12 at 50 Solon, Cedar Springs, Michigan 49319.
2. Prior to the issuance of the license, and during subsequent modifications of the statutes and rules, Licensees received copies of the Child Care Organizations Act, the licensing rule book for family and group child care homes, and the Child Protection Law. These rules and statutes are posted and available for download at www.michigan.gov/lara.

3. Licensees failed to act in a manner that is conducive to the welfare of children, failed to provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times, and are not suitable to meet the needs of children and provide for their care, supervision, and protection. Specifically:

    a. Licensees are active illegal drug users:

        i. During an interview with Licensing Consultant Rachel Arens and [redacted], Licensee Ericka Cronkright stated that both she and Licensee Thomas Cronkright started using methamphetamine, or meth, in August 2022. She stated that Mr. Cronkright also uses cocaine.

        ii. Ms. Cronkright told Ms. Arens and [redacted] that they use drugs on the premises but not while children are in care. She indicated that they will sometimes use meth in the child care room which is attached to the home.

        iii. Ms. Cronkright told Ms. Arens and [redacted] that they both used meth on the night of April 27, 2023. She stated that the following day, they closed the child care because they were in no shape to care for kids due to their meth use. Ms. Cronkright told Ms. Arens that she has been caring for less than six children because Mr. Cronkright does drugs more often than she, and she cannot always count on him to help with the children.

b. Licensee Thomas Cronkright physically assaulted Licensee Ericka Cronkright while children were in care:

i. On the evening of April 30, 2023, Mr. Cronkright used meth while in the home.

ii. On May 1, 2023, at 6:36 a.m., the following children were present at the home and in Licensees' care:

1. Child A [redacted]
2. Child B [redacted] and
3. Child C [redacted]

iii. On May 1, 2023, sometime after 6:36 a.m., Mr. Cronkright became upset with Ms. Cronkright regarding something on her phone. Mr. Cronkright grabbed her by the hair and slammed her head on the back of the couch. They began arguing, and Mr. Cronkright slammed her head on the diaper changing table while threatening to kill her. He continued to hit her in the face with her phone, and Ms. Cronkright attempted to call 911 by using Siri.

iv. On May 1, 2023, Mr. Cronkright continued assaulting Ms. Cronkright by putting his knee on her chest and attempting to turn or flick her head as if he was trying to break her neck. He continued to hit her with his knee while she was on the floor. He then said, "Don't move or I'll kill you," retrieved a shotgun, and pointed it at Ms. Cronkright. At this point, Ms. Cronkright's nose was bleeding. Ms. Cronkright then picked up Child A, who was

crying. Mr. Cronkright pointed his gun at Ms. Cronkright and Child A and then hit Ms. Cronkright in her head with his elbow.

v. On May 1, 2023, during the assault, Ms. Cronkright left the home while holding Child A. Mr. Cronkright told her, “You better fucking run bitch, or you’re going to die.” She ran down the driveway, fell, and when she looked back, he still had his gun pointed at her. Ms. Cronkright was bleeding on Child A. Mr. Cronkright got into his truck, continued to tell her she was going to die, and then drove away from the home. Ms. Cronkright ran to a neighbor’s house where she hid in the garage while the neighbor called the police. At this time, Child B and Child C were left alone in the home.

vi. On May 1, 2023, at 7:22 a.m., Kent County Sheriff deputies were dispatched to Licensee’s home. When they arrived at 7:27 a.m., Licensees’ dogs, which were in the home, were behaving in an aggressive manner, and the deputies had to contact Animal Control to subdue the dogs before they could gain entry. During this time, Child B and Child C were alone in the home.

vii. On May 1, 2023, after the police arrived at Licensees’ home, Licensee Ericka Cronkright was transported to [redacted] where she was treated for her injuries.

viii. On May 1, 2023, Licensee Thomas Cronkright was arrested for felony assault and aggravated domestic violence. An arraignment is scheduled for May 2, 2023.

ix. On May 1, 2023, at 5:25 p.m., [redacted] and Ms. Arens went to Licensees' home. They observed blood splatters leading into the bathroom and on the bathroom floor. A door frame was cracked and lying on the floor of the entryway.

4. Licensees failed to keep ammunition separate from firearms in the home, as evidenced by the following:

   a. On May 1, 2023, at 3:45 p.m., Ms. Arens and [redacted] interviewed Licensee Thomas Cronkright at the Kent County Jail where he was being held. Mr. Cronkright told them that he always keeps an ammunition shell taped to the outside of the weapon. He acknowledged that the ammunition was taped on the weapon that day.

   b. On May 1, 2023, Licensee Ericka Cronkright told Ms. Arens and [redacted] that Mr. Cronkright usually keeps an ammunition shell taped to the outside of the gun, and that when he pointed it at her that morning, the shell was gone. She stated that the weapon was cocked and loaded when he pointed it at her.

COUNT I

The conduct of Licensees, as set forth in paragraphs 3(a) and 3(b) above, evidences a willful and substantial violation of:

R 400.1902

(2) An applicant or licensee shall be of responsible character and shall be suitable and able to meet the needs of children and provide for their care, supervision, and protection.

COUNT II

The conduct of Licensees, as set forth in paragraphs 3(a) and 3(b) above, evidences a willful and substantial violation of:

R 400.1902

(3) All persons, including minors, residing in the child care home shall meet all of the following requirements:

(c) Act in a manner that is conducive to the welfare of children.

NOTE:
MCL 722.115m

(b) "Conducive to the welfare of the children" means:

(*i*) The service and facility comply with this act and the administrative rules promulgated under this act.

(*ii*) The disposition, temperament, condition, and action of the applicant, licensee, licensee designee, program director, child care staff member, and member of the household promote the safety and well-being of the children served.

COUNT III

The conduct of Licensees, as set forth in paragraphs 3(a) and 3(b) above, provides grounds for revocation pursuant to:

MCL 722.115m

(2) If the department determines that a service, facility, applicant, licensee, child care staff member, or member of the household is not conducive to the welfare of the children, the department shall deny that application or revoke that licensee's license according to section 11.

NOTE:
MCL 722.115m

(b) "Conducive to the welfare of the children" means:

(*i*) The service and facility comply with this act and the administrative rules promulgated under this act.

(*ii*) The disposition, temperament, condition, and action of the applicant, licensee, licensee designee,
program director, child care staff member, and member of the household promote the safety and well-being of
the children served.

COUNT IV

The conduct of Licensees, as set forth in paragraphs 3(a) and 3(b) above, evidences a willful and substantial violation of:

R 400.1911

(1) A licensee shall ensure appropriate care and supervision of children at all times.

COUNT V

The conduct of Licensees, as set forth in paragraphs 3(b)(v) and 3(b)(vi) above, evidences a willful and substantial violation of:

R 400.1911

(2) A licensee or a child care staff member shall be present in the home at all times when children are in care.

COUNT VI

The conduct of Licensees, as set forth in paragraphs 4(a) and 4(b) above, evidences a willful and substantial violation of:

R 400.1935

(1) All firearms must be unloaded and properly stored in a secure, safe, locked environment inaccessible to children during hours of operation or while children are in care at a child care home. A secure and locked environment means a locked commercial gun safe, or a trigger lock installed and locked according to the manufacturer's recommendations to prevent discharge.

DUE TO THE serious nature of the above violations and the potential risk it represents to vulnerable children in Licensees' care, emergency action is required. Therefore the provision of MCL 24.292 of the Administrative Procedures Act of 1969, as amended, is invoked. Licensees are hereby notified that the license to operate a group child care home is summarily suspended.

EFFECTIVE 6:00 p.m., on May 2, 2023, Licensees are ordered not to operate a group child care home at 50 Solon, Cedar Springs, Michigan 49319, or at any other location or address. Licensees are not to receive children for care after that time or date. Licensees are responsible for informing parents or guardians of children in care that license has been suspended and that Licensees can no longer provide care.

HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE Department has summarily suspended Licensees' license, an administrative hearing will be promptly scheduled before an administrative

law judge. Licensees MUST NOTIFY the Department and the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules in writing within seven calendar days after receipt of this Notice if Licensees wish to appeal the summary suspension and attend the administrative hearing. The written request must be submitted via email, fax, or mail to:

Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules
611 West Ottawa Street, 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 30695
Lansing, Michigan 48909-2484
Phone: 517-335-7519
FAX: 517-763-0155
MOAHR-BSD-Support@michigan.gov

MCL 24.272 of the Administrative Procedures Act of 1969 permits the Department to proceed with the administrative hearing even if Licensees do not appear. Licensees may be represented by an attorney at the administrative hearing.

DATED: 05/02/2023

Erika Bigelow, Division Director
Child Care Licensing Bureau

DATED:05/02/2023

Emily Laidlaw, Director
Child Care Licensing Bureau

This is the last and final page of the ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION AND NOTICE OF INTENT in the matter of Ericka and Thomas Cronkright, DG410399528, consisting of nine pages, this page included.

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