



# OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

November 15, 2018

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**BY FIRST-CLASS AND CERTIFIED  
MAIL NO. 9414-7266-9904-2129-1986-25**

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In re Celio Young, Esquire  
*D.C. Bar Membership No. 421672*  
*Disciplinary Docket No. 2017-D213*

Dear Mr. Young:

This office has completed its investigation of the above-referenced matter. We find that your conduct reflected a disregard of certain ethical standards under the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct ("the Rules") specifically Rules 1.3(a) and (c), 1.4(a) and 1.16. We are, therefore, issuing you this Informal Admonition.

We docketed this matter based upon a complaint from your former client, F.J., who states that she and her husband J.J. retained you to assist them with a personal injury claim and that you failed to communicate with them, failed to withdraw from the matter in a timely manner, and neglected the matter.

***Relevant facts***

Shortly after they were involved in a July 3, 2015 accident with an uninsured motorist, you agreed to represent F.J. and J.J. in negotiating an insurance claim or potentially filing a personal injury lawsuit against the other driver and their own insurance carrier under the uninsured motorist coverage provision of their policy. On July 10, 2015, you helped them get a rental car and began collecting and compiling their medical records to provide to their insurer. Shortly after you were hired, you informed your clients you would not represent them in filing a civil lawsuit against the other driver since the police investigation revealed the other driver was not at fault. You agreed to help them negotiate a settlement with their insurer after you obtained all of the medical records and bills. From July 2015 to April 2016, you collected medical records and bills related to F.J. and J.J.'s treatment for injuries they sustained in the

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accident, and you sent their insurance company a letter notifying them that you represented them. However, you reiterated in an April 29, 2016 phone conversation with F.J. that you would not represent her and her husband in filing a law suit.

From April 30, 2016 and continuing, you collected medical records and bills, but failed to communicate with your clients. You did not respond to their requests for information or their questions on how to proceed. In March 2017, they sent you a letter complaining about your failure to return their calls, and informing you they had received unopened, returned mail they had sent you. In the letter, they asked you to terminate the representation if you could not represent them. You did not respond.

Hearing nothing back from you, they wrote again on June 6, 2017, asking what steps you had taken on their behalf and asking you again to return all their documents if you could not represent them. When you did not respond, they filed their complaint with Disciplinary Counsel. After returning their records in December 2017, you failed to notify their insurer that you had withdrawn from representing F.J. and J.J. You did not effectively withdraw until April 23, 2018, after they made a specific request to you in March 2018, to send them a letter in writing that you were no longer their lawyer. Your letter came four months after you returned their records in December 2017 and had no intention of further representing them.

You admit the allegations regarding your lack of communications with F.J. and J.J. You explain that during the period of July 2016 and throughout 2017, you had a medical condition which affected your ability to effectively represent them, but otherwise you have no excuse for your conduct. You state that you take full responsibility for your lack of communication and the delay in dealing with your clients.

We have found that you violated Disciplinary Rules 1.3(a) and (c), 1.4(a), and 1.16. The time it took you to finally withdraw from the representation was excessive and frustrating to your clients who wanted to know if you were pursuing their case and, if not, to withdraw so they could communicate with their insurer.

*Rule 1.3 (a) states that a lawyer shall represent a client zealously and diligently within the bounds of the law.*

*Rule 1.3 (c) states that a lawyer shall act with reasonable promptness in representing a client.*

*Rule 1.4 (a) requires a lawyer to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of a matter, and to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.*

*Rule 1.16 requires a lawyer to withdraw from representation of a client when the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the clients and when the lawyer is discharged.*

You agreed to represent F.J. and J.J., and thereafter gathered medical records and bills, and forwarded them to their insurance adjuster along with a notice of representation. After that, you failed to keep your clients reasonably informed. You ignored their inquiries pertaining to next steps and whether you were going to continue to represent them. Finally, you did not act with reasonable promptness in dealing with their request for you to withdraw so they could communicate with their insurer.

### ***Conclusion***

In issuing this informal admonition, we have taken into consideration that you have no prior discipline; accepted full responsibility for your actions during the investigative stage of the matter, even before you were offered and agreed to accept this informal admonition; presented credible evidence in mitigation of your misconduct; and have agreed to take a three-hour Continuing Legal Education course in professional ethics offered by the D.C. Bar and pre-approved by this office.

This letter constitutes an Informal Admonition pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, §§ 3, 6, and 8, and is public when issued. Please refer to the attachment to this letter of Informal Admonition for a statement of its effect and your right to have it vacated and have a formal hearing before a hearing committee.

If you would like to have a formal hearing, you must submit a written request for a hearing within 14 days of the date of this letter to the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, with a copy to the Board on Professional Responsibility, unless Disciplinary Counsel grants an extension of time. If a hearing is requested, this Informal Admonition will be vacated, and Disciplinary Counsel will institute formal charges pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, §§ 8(b) and (c). This case will then be assigned to a hearing committee and a hearing will be scheduled by the Executive Attorney for the Board on Professional Responsibility pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, § 8(c). Such a hearing could result in a recommendation to dismiss the charge(s) against you or a recommendation for a finding of culpability, in which case the sanction recommended by the Hearing Committee is not limited to an Informal Admonition.

Sincerely,

Hamilton P. Fox, III  
Disciplinary Counsel

Enclosure: Attachment letter to Informal Admonition

HPF:CRS:eaf