



Public
New York State Board for Professional Medical Conduct
433 River Street, Suite 303 • Troy, New York 12180-2299 • (518) 402-0863

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner
NYS Department of Health
James W. Clyne, Jr.
Executive Deputy Commissioner
Keith W. Servis, Director
Office of Professional Medical Conduct

Kendrick A. Sears, M.D.
Chair
Carmela Torrelli
Vice Chair
Katherine A. Hawkins, M.D., J.D.
Executive Secretary

May 13, 2010

CERTIFIED MAIL-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Clara E. Somoza, D.O.

Re: License No. 225887

Dear Dr. Somoza:

Enclosed is a copy of BPMC #10-79 of the New York State Board for Professional Medical Conduct. This order and any penalty provided therein goes into effect May 20, 2010.

If the penalty imposed by this Order is a surrender, revocation or suspension, you are required to deliver your license and registration within five (5) days of receipt of this Order and return it to the Office of Professional Medical Conduct, New York State Department of Health, 433 River Street, Suite 303, Troy, NY 12180-2299

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Hawkins, M.D., J.D.
Executive Secretary
Board for Professional Medical Conduct

Enclosure

cc: Carolyn Shearer, Esq.
Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC
111 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12210-2211

IN THE MATTER
OF
CLARA SOMOZA, D.O.

CONSENT
ORDER

BPMC No. #10-79

Upon the application of (Respondent) Clara Somoza, D.O., in the attached Consent Agreement and Order, which is made a part of this Consent Order, it is

ORDERED, that the Consent Agreement, and its terms, are adopted; and it is further

ORDERED, that this Consent Order shall be effective upon issuance by the Board, either

- by mailing of a copy of this Consent Order, either by first class mail to Respondent at the address in the attached Consent Agreement or by certified mail to Respondent's attorney, OR
- upon facsimile transmission to Respondent or Respondent's attorney, whichever is first.

SO ORDERED.

DATE: 5-11-2010

~~KENDRICK A. SEARS, M.D.~~
Chair
State Board for Professional Medical Conduct

**IN THE MATTER
OF
CLARA SOMOZA, D.O.**

**CONSENT
AGREEMENT
AND
ORDER**

CLARA SOMOZA, D.O., represents that all of the following statements are true:

That on or about August 7, 2002, I was licensed to practice as a physician in the State of New York, and issued License No. 225887 by the New York State Education Department.

My current address is
and I will advise the Director of the Office of Professional Medical Conduct of any change of address.

I understand that the New York State Board for Professional Medical Conduct (Board) has charged me with two specifications of professional misconduct.

A copy of the Amended Statement of Charges, marked as Exhibit "A", is attached to and part of this Consent Agreement.

I plead no contest to the first specification in full satisfaction of the charges against me, and agree to the following penalty:

Pursuant to Section 230-a (2) of the New York Public Health Law, my license to practice medicine shall be suspended for a period of thirty-six (36) months, the term of said suspension to be stayed; and

Pursuant to Section 230-a (9) of the New York Public Health Law, I shall be placed on probation for a period of thirty-six (36) months, subject to the terms set forth in the attached Exhibit "B".

I further agree that the Consent Order shall impose the following conditions:

That Respondent shall remain in continuous compliance with all requirements of N.Y. Educ Law § 6502 including but not limited to the requirements that a licensee shall register and continue to be registered with the New York State Education Department (except during periods of actual suspension) and that a licensee shall pay all registration fees. Respondent shall not exercise the option provided in N.Y. Educ. Law § 6502(4) to avoid registration and payment of fees. This condition shall take effect 120 days after the Consent Order's effective date and will continue so long as Respondent remains a licensee in New York State; and

That Respondent shall cooperate fully with the Office of Professional Medical Conduct (OPMC) in its administration and enforcement of this Consent Order and in its investigations of matters concerning Respondent. Respondent shall respond in a timely manner to all OPMC requests for written periodic verification of Respondent's compliance with this Consent Order. Respondent shall meet with a person designated by the Director of OPMC, as directed. Respondent shall respond promptly and provide all documents and information within Respondent's control, as directed. This condition shall take effect upon the Board's issuance of the Consent Order and will continue so long as Respondent remains licensed in New York State.

I stipulate that my failure to comply with any conditions of this Consent Order shall constitute misconduct as defined by Section 6530(29) of the New York Education Law.

I agree that, if I am charged with professional misconduct in future, this Consent Agreement and Order **shall** be admitted into evidence in that proceeding.

I ask the Board to adopt this Consent Agreement.

I understand that if the Board does not adopt this Consent Agreement, none of its terms shall bind me or constitute an admission of any of the acts of alleged misconduct; this Consent Agreement shall not be used against me in any way and shall be kept in strict confidence; and the Board's denial shall be without prejudice to

the pending disciplinary proceeding and the Board's final determination pursuant to New York Public Health Law.

I agree that, if the Board adopts this Consent Agreement, the Chair of the Board shall issue a Consent Order in accordance with its terms. I agree that this Consent Order shall take effect upon its issuance by the Board, either by mailing of a copy of the Consent Order by first class mail to me at the address in this Consent Agreement, or to my attorney by certified mail, OR upon facsimile transmission to me or my attorney, whichever is first. The Consent Order, this agreement, and all attached Exhibits shall be public documents, with only patient identities, if any, redacted. As public documents, they may be posted on the Department's website.

I stipulate that the proposed sanction and Consent Order are authorized by Sections 230 and 230-a of the Public Health Law, and that the Board and OPMC have the requisite powers to carry out all included terms. I ask the Board to adopt this Consent Agreement of my own free will and not under duress, compulsion or restraint. In consideration of the value to me of the Board's adoption of this Consent Agreement, allowing me to resolve this matter without the various risks and burdens of a hearing on the merits, I knowingly waive my right to contest the Consent Order for which I apply, whether administratively or judicially, I agree to be bound by the Consent Order, and I ask that the Board adopt this Consent Agreement.

I understand and agree that the attorney for the Department, the Director of OPMC and the Chair of the Board each retain complete discretion either to enter into the proposed agreement and Consent Order, based upon my application, or to decline to do so. I further understand and agree that no prior or separate written or oral

communication can limit that discretion.

DATE: 4/23/2010

CLARA SOMOZA, D.O.
RESPONDENT

The undersigned agree to Respondent's attached Consent Agreement and to its proposed penalty, terms and conditions.

DATE: 4/27/2010

BOND SCHOENECK & KING, PLLP

By: CAROLYN SHEARER, ESQ.
Attorneys for Respondent

DATE: 4/29/10

JEFFREY J. CONKLIN, ESQ.
Associate Counsel
Bureau of Professional Medical Conduct

DATE: 5/11/10

KEITH W. SERVIS
Director
Office of Professional Medical Conduct

IN THE MATTER
OF
CLARA SOMOZA, D.O.

AMENDED
STATEMENT
OF
CHARGES

CLARA SOMOZA, D.O., the Respondent, was authorized to practice medicine in New York State on or about August 7, 2002, by the issuance of license number 225887 by the New York State Education Department.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- A. Respondent provided medical care to Patient A (hereinafter identified in the attached Appendix A) a 50 year old female, at the Glens Fall Hospital Emergency Department, Glens Falls, New York, on November 2, 2005. Patient A, who had tripped and fallen down a flight of stairs, presented to the Emergency Department with weakness of the upper extremity, and complaints of shoulder, neck and back pain. Patient A was documented to have alcohol on her breath and to be intoxicated. Employees of the Empire Ambulance Service had applied a cervical collar on Patient A and placed her on a backboard. Respondent's treatment of Patient A failed to meet accepted standards of care in that:
1. Respondent failed to timely perform an indicated and appropriate neurological examination of Patient A;
 2. Respondent removed Patient A's cervical collar without having obtained an indicated and appropriate clinical or radiographic clearance therefor; and
 3. Respondent failed to properly immobilize and evaluate Patient A pending radiographic examination of said patient's cervical spine.

B. Respondent provided medical care to Patient B (hereinafter identified in the attached Appendix) a 57 year old female, at the Glens Fall Hospital Emergency Department on June 29, 2005. Patient B presented to Glens Falls Hospital Radiology Department with a complaint of right flank pain. Patient B was referred to the Emergency Department for right hydronephrosis. Patient B was administered narcotics for the pain she was experiencing and placed in the Clinical Decision Unit. Ultimately, Patient B became lethargic and developed carbon dioxide narcosis secondary to narcotics. Respondent's treatment of Patient B failed to meet accepted standards of care in that:

1. Respondent failed to timely obtain an indicated and mandated arterial blood gases test;
2. Respondent failed to timely perform an indicated intubation of Patient B;
3. Respondent failed to timely recognize Patient B's documented allergy to Dilaudid and to timely and appropriately review said patient's clinical situation, including performing a physical examination and evaluating diagnostic test results;
4. Based upon Patient's B's deteriorating medical condition Respondent failed to provide indicated and appropriate active medical management of said patient; and
5. Respondent failed to administer the indicated and appropriate dosage of Narcan to Patient B.

SPECIFICATION OF CHARGES

FIRST SPECIFICATION

(Negligence on more than one occasion)

Respondent is charged with committing misconduct as defined in New York Education Law Section 6530 (3) by practicing the profession with negligence on more than one occasion as set forth in two or more of the following:

1. The facts of A. and A.1, A. and A.2, A. and A.3, A. and A.4, and A. and A.5, and B. and B.1, B. and B.2, B. and B.3, B. and B.4, and B. and B5.

SECOND SPECIFICATION

(Incompetence on more than one occasion)

Respondent is charged with committing misconduct as defined in New York Education Law Section 6530 (5) by practicing the profession with incompetence on more than one occasion as set forth in two or more of the following:

2. The facts of A. and A.1, A. and A.2, A. and A.3, A. and A.4, and A. and A.5, and B. and B.1, B. and B.2, B. and B.3, B. and B.4, and B. and B5.

DATE: April 30, 2010
Albany, New York

PETER D. VAN BUREN, ESQ.
Deputy Counsel
Bureau of Professional Medical Conduct

EXHIBIT "B"

Terms of Probation

1. Respondent's conduct shall conform to moral and professional standards of conduct and governing law. Any act of professional misconduct by Respondent as defined by N.Y. Educ. Law §§ 6530 or 6531 shall constitute a violation of probation and may subject Respondent to an action pursuant to N.Y. Pub. Health Law § 230(19).
2. Respondent shall maintain active registration of Respondent's license (except during periods of actual suspension) with the New York State Education Department Division of Professional Licensing Services, and shall pay all registration fees.
3. Respondent shall provide the Director, Office of Professional Medical Conduct (OPMC), Hedley Park Place, 433 River Street Suite 303, Troy, New York 12180-2299 with the following information, in writing, and ensure that this information is kept current: a full description of Respondent's employment and practice; all professional and residential addresses and telephone numbers within and outside New York State; and all investigations, arrests, charges, convictions or disciplinary actions by any local, state or federal agency, institution or facility. Respondent shall notify OPMC, in writing, within 30 days of any additions to or changes in the required information.
4. Respondent shall cooperate fully with, and respond in a timely manner to, OPMC requests to provide written periodic verification of Respondent's compliance with the terms of this Consent Order. Upon the Director of OPMC's request, Respondent shall meet in person with the Director's designee.
5. Respondent's failure to pay any monetary penalty by the prescribed date shall subject Respondent to all provisions of law relating to debt collection by New York State, including but not limited to: the imposition of interest, late payment charges and collection fees; referral to the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance for collection; and non-renewal of permits or licenses [Tax Law § 171(27); State Finance Law § 18; CPLR § 5001; Executive Law § 32].
6. The probation period shall toll when Respondent is not engaged in active medical practice in New York State for a period of 30 consecutive days or more. Respondent shall notify the Director of OPMC, in writing, if Respondent is not currently engaged in, or intends to leave, active medical practice in New York State for a consecutive 30 day period. Respondent shall then notify the

Director again at least 14 days before returning to active practice. Upon Respondent's return to active practice in New York State, the probation period shall resume and Respondent shall fulfill any unfulfilled probation terms and such additional requirements as the Director may impose as reasonably relate to the matters set forth in Exhibit "A" or as are necessary to protect the public health.

PRACTICE MONITOR

7. Within thirty days of the Consent Order's effective date, Respondent shall practice medicine only when monitored by a licensed physician, board certified in an appropriate specialty, ("practice monitor") proposed by Respondent and subject to the written approval of the Director of OPMC. Any medical practice in violation of this term shall constitute the unauthorized practice of medicine.
 - a. Respondent shall make available to the monitor any and all records or access to the practice requested by the monitor, including on-site observation. The practice monitor shall visit Respondent's medical practice at each and every location, on a random unannounced basis at least monthly and shall examine a selection (no fewer than 20) of records maintained by Respondent, including patient records, prescribing information and office records. The review will determine whether the Respondent's medical practice is conducted in accordance with the generally accepted standards of professional medical care. Any perceived deviation of accepted standards of medical care or refusal to cooperate with the monitor shall be reported within 24 hours to OPMC.
 - b. Respondent shall be solely responsible for all expenses associated with monitoring, including fees, if any, to the monitoring physician.
 - c. Respondent shall cause the practice monitor to report quarterly, in writing, to the Director of OPMC.
 - d. Respondent shall maintain medical malpractice insurance coverage with limits no less than \$2 million per occurrence and \$6 million per policy year, in accordance with Section 230(18)(b) of the Public Health Law. Proof of coverage shall be submitted to the Director of OPMC prior to Respondent's practice after the effective date of this Order.

8. The Director of OPMC may review Respondent's professional performance. This review may include but shall not be limited to: a review of office records, patient records, hospital charts, and/or electronic records; and interviews with or periodic visits with Respondent and staff at practice locations or OPMC offices.
9. Respondent shall adhere to federal and state guidelines and professional standards of care with respect to infection control practices. Respondent shall ensure education, training and oversight of all office personnel involved in medical care, with respect to these practices.
10. Respondent shall maintain complete and legible medical records that accurately reflect the evaluation and treatment of patients and contain all information required by State rules and regulations concerning controlled substances.
11. Respondent shall enroll in and complete a continuing education program in the area of emergency medicine for a minimum of 40 credit hours. This continuing education program is subject to the Director of OPMC's prior written approval and shall be completed within the first year of the probation period.
12. Respondent shall comply with this Consent Order and all its terms, and shall bear all associated compliance costs. Upon receiving evidence of noncompliance with, or a violation of, these terms, the Director of OPMC and/or the Board may initiate a violation of probation proceeding, and/or any other such proceeding authorized by law, against Respondent.