433 River Street, Suite 303

Troy, New York 12180-2299

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H. Commissioner

Dennis P. Whalen
Executive Deputy Commissioner

2005 January 4, 2205

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Sarwur Murtuza, M.B.B.S. P.O. Box 548 Sparta, North Carolina 28675

Sarwur Murtuza, M.B.B.S. 302 Maple Street Sparta, North Carolina 28675 Sarwur Murtuza, M.B.B.S. 402 Maple Street Sparta, North Carolina 28675

Robert Bogan, Esq.
Paul Robert Maher, Esq.
NYS Department of Health
433 River Street – 4th Floor
Troy, New York 12180

RE: In the Matter of Sarwar Murtuza, M.B.B.S.

Dear Parties:

Enclosed please find the Determination and Order No. 04-103R of the Hearing Committee in the above referenced matter. This Determination and Order shall be deemed effective upon the receipt or seven (7) days after mailing by certified mail as per the provisions of §230, subdivision 10, paragraph (h) of the New York State Public Health Law.

Five days after receipt of this Order, you will be required to deliver to the Board of Professional Medical Conduct your license to practice medicine together with the registration certificate. Delivery shall be by either certified mail or in person to:

Office of Professional Medical Conduct New York State Department of Health Hedley Park Place 433 River Street - Fourth Floor Troy, New York 12180 If your license or registration certificate is lost, misplaced or its whereabouts is otherwise unknown, you shall submit an affidavit to that effect. If subsequently you locate the requested items, they must then be delivered to the Office of Professional Medical Conduct in the manner noted above.

As prescribed by the New York State Public Health Law §230, subdivision 10, paragraph (i), and §230-c subdivisions 1 through 5, (McKinney Supp. 1992), "the determination of a committee on professional medical conduct may be reviewed by the Administrative Review Board for professional medical conduct." Either the licensee or the Department may seek a review of a committee determination.

Request for review of the Committee's determination by the Administrative Review Board stays penalties other than suspension or revocation until final determination by that Board. Summary orders are not stayed by Administrative Review Board reviews.

All notices of review must be served, by certified mail, upon the Administrative Review Board and the adverse party within fourteen (14) days of service and receipt of the enclosed Determination and Order.

The notice of review served on the Administrative Review Board should be forwarded to:

James F. Horan, Esq., Administrative Law Judge New York State Department of Health Bureau of Adjudication Hedley Park Place 433 River Street, Fifth Floor Troy, New York 12180

The parties shall have 30 days from the notice of appeal in which to file their briefs to the Administrative Review Board. Six copies of all papers must also be sent to the attention of Mr. Horan at the above address and one copy to the other party. The stipulated record in this matter shall consist of the official hearing transcript(s) and all documents in evidence.

Parties will be notified by mail of the Administrative Review Board's Determination and Order.

Sincerely,

Sean D. O'Brien, Director

D. O'Brien

Bureau of Adjudication

SDO:cah Enclosure STATE OF NEW YORK : DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
STATE BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL CONDUCT

IN THE MATTER

OF

SARWAR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S.

REMAND DETERMINATION AND ORDER

BPMC #04-103R



A Notice of Hearing and Statement of Charges, both dated March 16, 2004, were served upon the Respondent, SARWAR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S. ('the Respondent''). JOEL H. PAULL, D.D.S., M.D., Chairperson, SHELDON H. PUTTERMAN, M.D. and MS. FRANCES TARLTON, duly designated members of the State Board for Professional Medical Conduct, served as the Hearing Committee in this matter pursuant to Section 230(10)(e) of the Public Health Law. STEPHEN L. FRY, ESQ., Administrative Law Judge, served as the Administrative Officer.

The statement of charges upon which this proceeding was initially commenced, dated March 16, 2004, alleged that Respondent: had, on or about October 1, 2003, surrendered his North Carolina medical license, based upon his inability to practice medicine safely by reason of alcohol or other substance abuse; and had, on or about November 14, 2003, been convicted, based upon a guilty plea, of Driving Under the Influence. A copy of the Statement of Charges is attached as part of Appendix I.

A hearing was held on April 21, 2004, at the Offices of the New York State Department of Health, Hedley Park Place, 433 River Street, Troy, New York. The

Department appeared by DONALD P. BERENS, JR., ESQ., General Counsel, by ROBERT BOGAN, ESQ. and PAUL ROBERT MAHER, ESQ., of Counsel. The Respondent appeared in person. Evidence was received and transcripts of these proceedings were made.

After consideration of the entire record, on June 30, 2004, the Hearing Committee rendered a Determination and Order directing the suspension of Respondent's license for one year based upon conclusion that his conviction for DWI and medical license surrender because of alcohol or other substance abuse formed the basis for misconduct findings in New York. The Hearing Committee also expressed concerns regarding Respondent's mental and physical status in addition to his substance and/or alcohol abuse propensities, and concern for his ability to practice medicine safely. These questions were raised not only by the evidence as to the matters covered by the Statement of Charges, but also by Respondent's affect and the content of his testimony at the hearing. A copy of the initial Determination and Order in this case, which is incorporated in this decision by reference, is attached as Appendix I.

This decision was appealed by the Department to the Administrative Review Board (ARB), and on September 7, 2004, the ARB issued a decision vacating the suspension, and remanding this matter to the Hearing Committee for the ordering of an evaluation pursuant to Public Health Law §230(7) and a reconsideration of the appropriate penalty.

Pursuant to the ARB decision the Hearing Committee, on October 29, 2004, ordered that Respondent undergo a medical/psychiatric examination pursuant to §230(7) of the Public Health Law. The Hearing Committee ordered that the evaluation be conducted at Talbott Recovery Campus of Atlanta Georgia ("Talbott"), that Respondent contact Talbott within 10 days of service of the order to set up the evaluation, and that the evaluation be

completed within 30 days, with copies of the evaluation reports to be sent to the Hearing Committee, the Administrative Law Judge and the parties. In making this determination, the Hearing Committee specifically denied Respondent's request that the evaluation be delayed until the spring of 2005 because of his financial situation. The Hearing Committee denied this request because Respondent offered no information that suggested that his financial situation would be any different at that time, because it was not convinced that Respondent could not arrange for the evaluation to be conducted within the proposed time frame, and because during any delay, the residents of New York State would be afforded no protection against any dangers Respondent's practice in this state might present, inasmuch as the Hearing Committee's original determination in this matter to suspend Respondent's license for one year was overturned by the ARB.

Respondent renewed his plea to delay the evaluation in a phone call to the Department's attorney's office some time around November 20, 2004, and the Administrative Law Judge informed Respondent in a letter dated November 23, 2004 that the Determination and Order were final and that his request had already been specifically denied in the Evaluation Order.

Pursuant to this Order, Respondent was to have completed the evaluation at Talbott by thirty days from the effective date of the order (unless there were delays beyond Respondent's control), and copies of the evaluation report were to have been sent to the Hearing Committee, the Administrative Law Judge and the parties. As of December 28, 2004, when it re-deliberated this matter, the Administrative Law Judge and Hearing Committee had not received any evaluation report or any other communication from Respondent or Talbott, and the Hearing Committee can only conclude that Respondent did not undergo the evaluation.

This leaves the Hearing Committee in a difficult position with respect to the determination of a penalty in this case. Had Respondent undergone the evaluation, the report would have detailed the precise nature of any emotional, physical and/or alcohol/substance abuse problems the Respondent might have, offered an assessment of the degree of danger his continued practice in New York presents, and recommended treatment/rehabilitation options.

The Hearing Committee feels that had it had such a report to consider in a timely fashion, it might have been in a position, if appropriate, to fashion a penalty that both afforded protection to the residents of New York and offered Respondent an opportunity to receive any appropriate treatment and/or rehabilitation. The lack of an assessment report leaves the Hearing Committee with only the information regarding Respondent's surrender of his medical license in North Carolina and his conviction for driving under the influence and with its impressions of Respondent from the hearing to guide its deliberations, and these items tend to establish that Respondent has emotional, physical and/or substance abuse problems that prevent him from practicing safely in New York at this time. The Hearing Committee has no reason to believe that Respondent did everything within his power to effectuate the timely conduct of the evaluation (the Hearing Committee recognizes the possibility that Respondent may have some underlying emotional problem that contributed to his failure to timely obtain the assessment).

For these reasons, the Hearing Committee concludes that, unfortunately, it has no choice but to revoke Respondent's New York license at this time. It is noted that Respondent may apply for reinstatement of his license after two years, and present pertinent information about his physical, mental and physical condition, rehabilitation, and

other pertinent documentation at that time so that an educated determination may then be made regarding his ability to practice safely in New York.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

The New York State medical license of SARWAR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S. is hereby REVOKED.

This ORDER shall be effective upon service on the Respondent pursuant to Public Health Law section 230(10)(h).

DATED: Eggertsville, New York

JOEL H. PAULL, D.D.S., M.D.

Chairperson

SHELDON H. PUTTERMAN, M.D. MS. FRANCES TARLTON

APPENDIX 1

STATE OF NEW YORK : DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
STATE BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL CONDUCT

IN THE MATTER

OF

SARWAR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S.

ORIGINAL

DETERMINATION AND ORDER

BPMC NO. 04-103

A Notice of Hearing and Statement of Charges, both dated March 16, 2004, were served upon the Respondent, SARWAR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S. ('the Respondent''; erroneously referred to in many of the Department's documents as "Sarwur" Murtuza). JOEL H. PAULL, D.D.S., M.D., Chairperson, SHELDON H. PUTTERMAN, M.D. and MS. FRANCES TARLTON, duly designated members of the State Board for Professional Medical Conduct, served as the Hearing Committee in this matter pursuant to Section 230(10)(e) of the Public Health Law. STEPHEN L. FRY, ESQ., Administrative Law Judge, served as the Administrative Officer.

A hearing was held on April 21, 2004, at the Offices of the New York State Department of Health, Hedley Park Place, 433 River Street, Troy, New York. The Department appeared by DONALD P. BERENS, JR., ESQ., General Counsel, by ROBERT BOGAN, ESQ. and PAUL ROBERT MAHER, ESQ., of Counsel. The Respondent appeared in person.

Evidence was received and transcripts of these proceedings were made.

After consideration of the entire record, the Hearing Committee issues this Determination and Order.

STATEMENT OF CASE

This case was brought pursuant to Public Health Law Section 230(10)(p). The statute provides for an expedited hearing where a licensee is charged solely with a violation of Education Law Section 6530(9). In such cases, a licensee is charged with misconduct based upon a prior criminal conviction in New York or another jurisdiction, or upon a prior administrative adjudication regarding conduct that would amount to professional misconduct, if committed in New York. The scope of an expedited hearing is limited to a determination of the nature and severity of the penalty to be imposed upon the licensee.

In the instant case, the statement of charges upon which this proceeding was commenced alleged that Respondent: had, on or about October 1, 2003, surrendered his North Carolina medical license, based upon his inability to practice medicine safely by reason of alcohol or other substance abuse; and had, on or about November 14, 2003, been convicted, based upon a guilty plea, of Driving Under the Influence. Respondent is charged with professional misconduct in New York pursuant to Education Law Section 6530(9)(a)(iii) based upon the criminal conviction and Section 6530(9)(d), based upon the license surrender in North Carolina. A copy of the Notice of Referral Proceeding and Statement of Charges is attached to this Determination and Order as Appendix 1.

WITNESSES

For the Petitioner:

None

For the Respondent:

Respondent

FINDINGS OF FACT

The following Findings of Fact were made after a review of the entire record in this matter. Numbers below in parentheses refer to exhibits, denoted by the prefix "Ex.". These citations refer to evidence found persuasive by the Hearing Committee in arriving at a particular finding. Conflicting evidence, if any, was considered and rejected in favor of the cited evidence. All Hearing Committee findings were unanimous.

- SARWAR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S., the Respondent, was authorized to practice medicine
 in New York State on July 30, 1982, by the issuance of license number 151005 by the
 New York State Education Department (Ex. 4).
- 2. On May 16, 2003, Respondent was arrested for Driving Under the Influence in Carter County Tennessee. Respondent pled guilty to this offense in the General Sessions Court of Carter County on November 14, 2003, and was sentenced to 11 months and 29 days of incarceration, suspended except for 2 days time actually served, one year's probation, and fined \$350 plus costs (Ex's. 5, 6).
- 3. On September 27, 2003, while being investigated by the North Carolina Medical Board ("the North Carolina Board") after the arrest, Respondent voluntarily surrendered his medical license in that state. The North Carolina Board reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank that the surrender was accepted because Respondent was unable to practice safely due to alcohol or other substance abuse (Ex.'s 5 and 7).

HEARING COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS

The hearing Committee concludes that the circumstances leading to the North Carolina

Board's disciplinary actions against Respondent would constitute misconduct under the

laws of New York State, pursuant to New York Education Law §6530(9)(d), in that they

would have constituted misconduct in New York, had Respondent been practicing in this

state at the time.

In addition, Respondent's conviction of DUI constitutes misconduct under New York

Education Law §6530(9)(a)(iii) because the conduct leading to the conviction would also

constitute a crime in New York State, if committed here.

VOTE OF THE HEARING COMMITTEE

SPECIFICATIONS

FIRST SPECIFICATION

Respondent violated New York Education Law §6530(9)(a)(iii) by having been

convicted of a crime in another state for conduct that would, if committed in New York

State, constitute a crime under the laws of New York State.

VOTE: SUSTAINED (3-0)

SECOND SPECIFICATION

Respondent violated New York Education Law §6530(9)(d) by having surrendered

his license to practice medicine after disciplinary action was instituted by a duly authorized

professional disciplinary agency of another state, where the conduct resulting in the

disciplinary action would, if committed in New York State, constitute professional

misconduct under the laws of New York State.

VOTE: SUSTAINED (3-0)

HEARING COMMITTEE DETERMINATION

The record in this case establishes that the North Carolina Board accepted Respondent's surrender of his North Carolina medical license in the face of an investigation into the circumstances leading to his arrest for DUI in Tennessee, and that he was thereafter convicted of that offense based upon a guilty plea. The criminal conviction and Tennessee Board action are binding on this tribunal pursuant to Public Health Law §230(10)(p), the statute governing this hearing, and the only issue remaining to be decided is the penalty to be imposed in New York State. This focus on the penalty to be imposed is intended in part to afford a Respondent the opportunity to demonstrate that he can practice medicine safely and that he can be relied upon not to commit future acts of misconduct, should he be allowed to continue to practice.

In this case, Respondent presented no evidence in support of the proposition that he could practice safely if allowed the continued opportunity to do so in New York State, and his testimony and demeanor raised more questions than they answered. For example, Respondent denied having been under the influence of alcohol or any "illegal" drugs at he time of his arrest, but was unable to adequately explain why he pled guilty to a driving offense, or why he surrendered his license, if he was innocent of the charges against him.

Respondent did testify that he was having a "bad reaction with medication" at the time of his arrest (Tr. 10), and mentioned prescription painkillers and treatments for tremors and minor seizures (Tr. 10, 19). Respondent also admitted, in an attempt to explain why the arresting officers felt he was under the influence of illicit substances, that he was having problems with hand/eye coordination at the time, and that he was having speech difficulties (Tr. 10,12). Respondent presented no documentation of exactly what his medical problems

are, but he testified that he is currently unemployed, cannot work more than 4 hours per day or 16 hours per week, and that he has applied for disability benefits (Tr. 15, 20, 22-23). Respondent also mentioned having had a neurological examination, the results of which he did not agree with, but the reports were not available for the Hearing Committee's consideration.

In addition to the questions Respondent's testimony raises about his physical condition, the Hearing Committee also has concerns regarding Respondent's psychological condition. His affect appeared flat and depressed. Since the DUI conviction and North Carolina board action were based upon findings related to unspecified substance abuse, the Hearing Committee has concerns regarding this issue.

The Hearing Committee feels, given the seriousness of the findings against Respondent in North Carolina and Tennessee, that the appropriate sanction to be imposed for is a one-year suspension of his medical license. The Hearing Committee feels that it has no choice but to order this suspension to protect the residents of New York State, since allowing Respondent to continue to practice despite whatever problems he may be having, which cannot be determined without further evaluation, would create unnecessary and avoidable risks.

The one-year suspension will afford the Department an opportunity to refer this matter for a full assessment of Respondent's possible psychiatric/medical/substance abuse problems. It is noted in this regard that, pursuant to Public Health Law §230(7), the Department may require a licensee to undergo a thorough medical/psychiatric examination to assess his ability to continue to practice in New York State whenever it has reason to believe that the licensee may be impaired by physical or mental ability, alcohol or drugs. The ordering of such an evaluation would be appropriate in Respondent's case, but the

assessment of Respondent's physical and mental condition is beyond the scope of the charges in this case and beyond the limited scope of a referral hearing under Public Health Law §230(10)(p).

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

The New York State medical license of SARWAR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S. is hereby suspended for a period of ONE (1) YEAR from the effective date of this order.

This ORDER shall be effective upon service on the Respondent pursuant to Public Health Law section 230(10)(h).

DATED: Eggertsville, New York

JOEL H) PAULL, D.D.S., M.D. Chairperson

SHELDON H. PUTTERMAN, M.D. MS. FRANCES TARLTON

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STATE BOARD FOR PROFESSONAL MEDICAL CONDUCT

IN THE MATTER

NOTICE OF

OF

REFERRAL

SARWUR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S. CO-03-12-5362-A

PROCEEDING

TO:

SARWUR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S.

P.O. Box 548

Sparta, NC 28675

SARWUR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S. 402 Maple Street Sparta, NC 28675

SARWUR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S. 302 Maple Street Sparta, NC 28675

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT:

An adjudicatory proceeding will be held pursuant to the provisions of N.Y. Pub. Health Law § 230(10)(p) and N.Y. State Admin. Proc. Act Sections 301-307 and 401. The proceeding will be conducted before a committee on professional conduct of the State Board for Professional Medical Conduct (Committee) on the 21st day of April 2004, at 10:00 in the forenoon of that day at the Hedley Park Place, 433 River Street, 4th Floor, Board Room, Troy, New York 12180.

At the proceeding, evidence will be received concerning the allegations set forth in the attached Statement of Charges. A stenographic record of the proceeding will be made and the witnesses at the proceeding will be sworn and examined.

You may appear in person at the proceeding and may be represented by counsel. You may produce evidence or sworn testimony on your behalf. Such evidence or sworn testimony shall be strictly limited to evidence and testimony relating to the nature and severity of the penalty to be imposed upon the licensee. Where the charges are based on the conviction of state law crimes in other jurisdictions, evidence may be offered that would show that the conviction would not be a crime in New York state. The Committee also may limit the number of witnesses whose testimony will be received, as well as the length of time any witness will be permitted to testify.

If you intend to present sworn testimony, the number of witnesses and an estimate of the time necessary for their direct examination must be submitted to the New York State Department of Health, Division of Legal Affairs, Bureau of Adjudication, Hedley Park Place, 5th Floor, 433 River Street, Troy, New York, ATTENTION: HON. SEAN O' BRIEN, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF ADJUDICATION, (hereinafter "Bureau of Adjudication") as well as the Department of Health attorney indicated below, on or before April 12, 2004.

Pursuant to the provisions of N.Y. Public Health Law §230(10)(p), you shall file a written answer to each of the Charges and Allegations in the Statement of Charges no later than ten days prior to the hearing. Any Charge of Allegation not so answered shall be deemed admitted. You may wish to seek the advice of counsel prior to filing such an answer. The answer shall be filed with the Bureau of Adjudication, at the address indicated above, and a copy shall be forwarded to the attorney for the Department of Health whose name appears below. You may file a brief and affidavits with the Committee. Six copies of all such papers you wish to submit must be filed with the Bureau of Adjudication at the address indicated above on or before April 12, 2004, and a copy of all papers must be served on the same date on the Department of Health attorney indicated below. Pursuant to Section 301(5) of the State Administrative Procedure Act, the Department, upon reasonable notice, will provide at no charge a qualified interpreter of the deaf to interpret the proceedings to, and the testimony of, any deaf person.

The proceeding may be held whether or not you appear. Please note that requests for adjournments must be made in writing to the Bureau of Adjudication, at the address indicated above, with a copy of the request to the attorney for the Department of Health, whose name appears below, at least five days prior to the scheduled date of the proceeding. Adjournment requests are not routinely granted. Claims of court engagement will require detailed affidavits of actual engagement. Claims of illness will require medical documentation. Failure to obtain an attorney within a reasonable period of time prior to the proceeding will not be grounds for an adjournment.

The Committee will make a written report of its findings, conclusions as to guilt, and a determination. Such determination may be reviewed by the Administrative Review Board for Professional Medical Conduct.

SINCE THESE PROCEEDINGS MAY RESULT IN A DETERMINATION
THAT SUSPENDS OR REVOKES YOUR LICENSE TO PRACTICE
MEDICINE IN NEW YORK STATE AND/OR IMPOSES A FINE FOR
EACH OFFENSE CHARGED, YOU ARE URGED TO OBTAIN AN
ATTORNEY TO REPRESENT YOU IN THIS MATTER.

DATED: Albany, New York

Mach 16, 2004

PETER D. VAN BUREN

Deputy Counsel

Bureau of Professional Medical Conduct

Inquiries should be addressed to:

Robert Bogan
Associate Counsel
New York State Department of Health
Office of Professional Medical Conduct
433 River Street – Suite 303
Troy, New York 12180
(518) 402-0828

STATE OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

STATE BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL CONDUCT

IN THE MATTER

STATEMENT

OF

OF

SARWUR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S., CO-03-12-5362-A **CHARGES**

SARWUR MURTUZA, M.B.B.S., the Respondent, was authorized to practice medicine in New York state on August 30, 1982, by the issuance of license number 151055 by the New York State Education Department.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- A. On or about October 1, 2003, the North Carolina Medical Board, (hereinafter "North Carolina Board"), by a letter (hereinafter "North Carolina Letter"), accepted the surrender of Respondent's license to practice medicine, based on being unable to practice medicine safely by reason of alcohol or other substance abuse.
- B. On or about November 14, 2003, in the General Sessions Court of Carter County, Tennessee, Respondent was found guilty, based on a plea of guilty, of Driving Under the Influence, a class A misdemeanor, and sentenced to a \$350.00 fine, eleven (11) months twenty nine (29) days confinement suspended except for two (2) days credit for time served, and one (1) year actual probation during which he may not drive in Tennessee.
- C. The conduct resulting in the North Carolina Medical Board disciplinary action against Respondent would constitute misconduct under the laws of New York State, pursuant to the following sections of New York State law:
- 1. New York Education Law §6530(8) (being a habitual abuser of alcohol, or being dependent on or a habitual user of narcotics, barbiturates, amphetamines, hallucinogens, or other drugs having similar effects).

SPECIFICATIONS FIRST SPECIFICATION

Respondent violated New York Education Law §6530(9)(a)(iii) being convicted or committing an act constituting a crime under the law of another jurisdiction and which, if committed within this state, would have constituted a crime under New York state law, in that Petitioner charges:

1. The facts in Paragraph A.

SECOND SPECIFICATION

Respondent violated New York Education Law §6530(9)(d) by having voluntarily surrendering his license to practice medicine after a disciplinary action was instituted by a duly authorized professional disciplinary agency of another state, where the conduct resulting in the voluntary surrender would, if committed in New York state, constitute professional misconduct under the laws New York state, in that Petitioner charges:

2. The facts in Paragraphs A and/or B.

DATED: Maul 16, 2004 Albany, New York Stro D. VAN BUREN

Deputy Counsel

Bureau of Professional Medical Conduct