



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

April 30, 2002

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Dario Zuniga, M.D.
12302 Valley Hill Drive
Houston, TX 77071

Dario Zuniga, M.D.
6550 Maple Ridge, Suite 122
Houston, TX 77081

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

RE: In the Matter of Dario Zuniga, M.D.

Dear Parties:

Enclosed please find the Determination and Order (No. 02-127) 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.

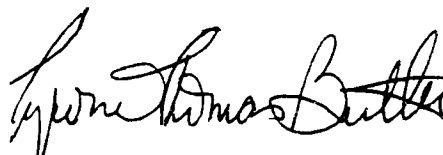
The notice of review served on the Administrative Review Board should be forwarded to:

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyrone T. Butler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

Tyrone T. Butler, Director
Bureau of Adjudication

TTB:nm
Enclosure

IN THE MATTER
OF
DARIO ZUNIGA, M.D.

DETERMINATION
AND
ORDER

BPMC-02-127

A hearing was held on April 17, 2002, at the offices of the New York State Department of Health ("the Petitioner"). A Notice of Referral Proceeding and a Statement of Charges, both dated February 8, 2002, were served upon the Respondent, **Dario Zuniga, M.D.** **Peter B. Kane, M.D.**, Chairperson, **Ernst A. Kopp, M.D.**, and **Mr. John D. Torrant**, 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. **John Wiley, Esq.**, Administrative Law Judge, served as the Administrative Officer.

The Petitioner appeared by **Donald P. Berens, Jr., Esq.**, General Counsel, by **Paul Robert Maher, Esq.**, and **Robert Bogan, Esq.**, of Counsel. The Respondent did not appear at the hearing, either in person or by counsel.

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 when 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 State 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 Respondent is charged with professional misconduct pursuant to Education Law Section 6530(9)(a)(iii), 6530(9)(b) and 6530(9)(d). Copies of the Notice of Referral Proceeding and the Statement of Charges are attached to this Determination and Order as Appendix 1.

WITNESSES

For the Petitioner: None
For the Respondent: Robert Bogan, Esq.

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.

1. Dario Zuniga, M.D., the Respondent, was authorized to practice medicine in New York State on March 7, 1975, by the issuance of license number 123324 by the New York State Education Department (Petitioner's Ex. 4).

2. In the State of Texas, on four occasions (September 23, 1977, September 6, 1984, February 19, 1992, and November 7, 1997), the Respondent was convicted of

driving while intoxicated. In each instance, the Respondent was placed on probation and fined. The November 7, 1997, conviction constituted a felony. (Petitioner's Ex. 5)

3. On September 7, 2001, the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners ("Texas Board"), by an Agreed Order, restricted the Respondent's license to practice medicine for three years and imposed conditions including that he abstain from the consumption of alcohol, dangerous drugs and controlled substances, that he submit to screenings for alcohol and drugs, and that he enlist a psychiatrist for follow-up care and counseling. The bases for this action by the Texas Board were the criminal convictions described in finding of fact 2, above. (Petitioner's Ex. 5)

HEARING COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS

The Hearing Committee concludes that the conduct of the Respondent would constitute professional misconduct under the laws of New York State, had the conduct occurred in New York State, pursuant to New York Education Law Section 6530(9)(a)(i) (being convicted of committing an act constituting a crime under state law).

VOTE OF THE HEARING COMMITTEE

FIRST THROUGH FOURTH SPECIFICATIONS

"Respondent violated New York Education Law Section 6530(9)(a)(iii) by having been convicted of 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..."

VOTE: Sustained (3-0)

FIFTH SPECIFICATION

"Respondent violated New York Education Law Section 6530(9)(b) by having been found guilty of improper professional practice or professional misconduct by a duly authorized professional disciplinary agency of another state where the conduct upon

which the finding was based would, if committed in New York state, constitute professional misconduct under the laws of New York state..."

VOTE: Sustained (3-0)

SIXTH SPECIFICATION

"Respondent violated New York Education Law Section 6530(9)(d) by having had disciplinary action taken 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 Respondent did not appear at the hearing. Petitioner's Ex. 2 and 3 demonstrate that the Respondent was properly served with notice of the charges against him and the time and place of the hearing. The Administrative Law Judge ruled that the hearing could proceed despite the absence of the Respondent.

The Respondent's four convictions prove that he has a problem with alcohol and disrespect for the law. Because the Respondent did not appear at the hearing, the hearing record contains no evidence of mitigating circumstances, rehabilitation or remorse. The Petitioner recommended that the Respondent's license to practice medicine be revoked; the hearing record contains no reason for rejecting this recommendation.


ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. The Respondent's license to practice medicine is revoked.
2. This Order shall be effective upon service on the Respondent by personal service or by certified or registered mail.

DATED: Cazenovia, New York

4/26/02, 2002

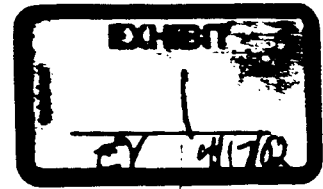


Peter B. Kane, M.D.
Chairperson

Ernst A. Kopp, M.D.
John D. Tarrant

APPENDIX I

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



IN THE MATTER
OF
DARIO ZUNIGA, M.D.
CO-01-11-5619-A

NOTICE OF
REFERRAL
PROCEEDING

TO: DARIO ZUNIGA, M.D.
12302 Valley Hill Drive
Houston, TX 77071

DARIO ZUNIGA, M.D.
6550 Maple Ridge, Suite 122
Houston, TX 77081

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 17th day of April 2002, at 10:00 in the forenoon of that day at the Hedley Park Place, 5th Floor, 433 River Street, 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.

TYRONE BUTLER, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF ADJUDICATION, (hereinafter "Bureau of Adjudication") as well as the Department of Health attorney indicated below, on or before April 8, 2002.

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 8, 2002, 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

February 8, 2002



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
OF
DARIO ZUNIGA, M.D.
CO-01-11-5619-A

STATEMENT
OF
CHARGES

DARIO ZUNIGA, M.D., the Respondent, was authorized to practice medicine in New York state on March 7, 1975, by the issuance of license number 123324 by the New York State Education Department.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- A. On or about September 23, 1977, in the County Criminal Court at Law No. 1 of Harris County, Texas, Respondent, based on a plea of nolo contendere, was convicted of Driving While Intoxicated, and sentenced to one (1) year probation and a \$200.00 fine.
- B. On or about September 6, 1984, in the County Criminal Court at Law No. 6 of Harris County, Texas, Respondent, based on a plea of guilty, was convicted of Driving While Intoxicated, and sentenced to two (2) years probation and a \$250.00 fine.
- C. On or about February 19, 1992, in the County Criminal Court at Law Number 012, Harris County, Texas, Respondent, based on a plea of guilty, was convicted of Driving While Intoxicated, and sentenced to two (2) years probation and a \$250.00 fine.
- D. On or about November 7, 1997, in the 174th District Court of Harris County, Texas, Respondent, based on a plea of nolo contendere, was convicted of Driving While Intoxicated, third offense, a third degree felony, and was sentenced to three (3) years probation and a \$1,000.00 fine.
- E. On or about September 7, 2001, the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners (hereinafter, "Texas Board"), by an Agreed Order (hereinafter "Texas Order"), RESTRICTED

Respondent's license to practice medicine for three (3) years and imposed conditions including that he abstain from the consumption of alcohol, dangerous drugs, or controlled substances, that he submit for appropriate examinations, including screening for alcohol or drugs, that he pay all costs for those screens, and that he enlist a psychiatrist for follow-up care and counseling at least once each month, based on the convictions described in Paragraphs A, B, C, and D above.

F. The conduct resulting in the Texas 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(9)(ii) (being convicted of committing an act constituting a crime under state law).

SPECIFICATIONS

FIRST THROUGH FOURTH SPECIFICATIONS

Respondent violated New York Education Law §6530(9)(iii) by having been convicted by 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;
2. The facts in Paragraph B;
3. The facts in Paragraph C, and/or
4. The facts in Paragraph D.

FIFTH SPECIFICATION

Respondent violated New York Education Law §6530(9)(b) by having been found guilty of improper professional practice or professional misconduct by a duly authorized professional disciplinary agency of another state where the conduct upon which the finding was based

would, if committed in New York state, constitute professional misconduct under the laws of New York state, in that Petitioner charges:


5. The facts in paragraphs A, B, C, D, E and/or F.

SIXTH SPECIFICATION

Respondent violated New York Education Law §6530(9)(d) by having had disciplinary action taken 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 New York state, in that Petitioner charges:

6. The facts in paragraphs A, B, C, D, E and/or F.

DATED: *Feb. 8*, 2001
Albany, New York


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