

STATE OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF MEDICINE

Final Order No. DOH-19-0722^S -MQA

FILED DATE APR 30 2019
Department of Health
By: Bryel Sanders
Deputy Agency Clerk

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,

Petitioner,

vs.

DOH CASE NO.: 2017-19955
LICENSE NO.: ME0100632

SREELATHA PULAKHANDAM, M.D.,

Respondent.

FINAL ORDER

THIS CAUSE came before the BOARD OF MEDICINE (Board) pursuant to Sections 120.569 and 120.57(4), Florida Statutes, on April 5, 2019, in West Palm Beach, Florida, for the purpose of considering a Settlement Agreement (attached hereto as Exhibit A) entered into between the parties in this cause. Upon consideration of the Settlement Agreement, the documents submitted in support thereof, the arguments of the parties, and being otherwise fully advised in the premises,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the Settlement Agreement as submitted be and is hereby approved and adopted in toto and incorporated herein by reference with the following clarification:

The costs set forth in Paragraph 3 of the Stipulated Disposition shall be set at \$1,340.45.

Accordingly, the parties shall adhere to and abide by all the terms and conditions of the Settlement Agreement as clarified above.

This Final Order shall take effect upon being filed with the Clerk of the Department of Health.

DONE AND ORDERED this 26th day of April, 2019.

BOARD OF MEDICINE

Cynthia A. Kemp for
Claudia Kemp, J.D., Executive Director
For Steven Rosenberg, M.D., Chair

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Final Order has been provided by U.S. Mail to SREELATHA PULAKHANDAM, M.D., 680 Millikens Bend, Covington, Louisiana 70433; to Julia Ingle, Esquire, Lubell Rosen, 200 S. Andrews Avenue, Suite 900, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301; by email to Allison Dudley, Assistant General Counsel, Department of Health, at Allison.Dudley@flhealth.gov; and by email to Edward A. Tellechea, Chief Assistant Attorney General, at

Ed.Tellechea@myfloridalegal.com this 30th day of
April, 2019.

Angel Sanders

Deputy Agency Clerk

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.

Ron DeSantis
Governor



Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 26, 2019

TO: Mark Whitten, J.D. Bureau Chief
Bureau of Health Care Practitioner Regulation

FROM: Claudia J. Kemp
Executive Director, Board of Medicine

SUBJECT: Delegation of Authority

This is to advise you that while I am out of the office Friday, April 26, 2019, the following Program Operations Administrator is delegated to serve as Acting Executive Director for the Board of Medicine.

Crystal Sanford Program Operations Administrator (850) 245- 4132

CK/rh

cc:

Sylvia Sanders
Staff, Board of Medicine
Board and Council Chairs

**STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,

Petitioner,

v.

DOH Case No. 2017-19955

SREELATHA PULAKHANDAM, M.D.,

Respondent.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Sreelatha Pulakhandam, M.D., referred to as the "Respondent," and the Department of Health, referred to as "Department," stipulate and agree to the following Agreement and to the entry of a Final Order of the Board of Medicine, referred to as "Board," incorporating the Stipulated Facts and Stipulated Disposition in this matter.

Petitioner is the state agency charged with regulating the practice of medicine pursuant to Section 20.43, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 456, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 458, Florida Statutes.

STIPULATED FACTS

1. At all times material hereto, Respondent was a licensed physician in the State of Florida having been issued license number ME 100632.
2. The Department charged Respondent with an Administrative Complaint that was filed and properly served upon Respondent alleging violations of Chapter 458, Florida Statutes, and the rules adopted pursuant thereto. A true and correct copy of the Administrative Complaint is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

3. For purposes of these proceedings, Respondent neither admits nor denies the allegations of fact contained in the Administrative Complaint.

STIPULATED CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Respondent admits that, In her capacity as a licensed physician, she is subject to the provisions of Chapters 456 and 458, Florida Statutes, and the jurisdiction of the Department and the Board.

2. Respondent admits that the facts alleged in the Administrative Complaint, if proven, would constitute violations of Chapters 456 and 458, Florida Statutes.

3. Respondent agrees that the Stipulated Disposition in this case is fair, appropriate and acceptable to Respondent.

STIPULATED DISPOSITION

1. **Letter Of Concern** – The Board shall issue a Letter of Concern against Respondent's license.

2. **Fine** - The Board shall impose an administrative fine of ***Six Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$6,500.00)*** against Respondent's license which Respondent shall pay to: Payments, Department of Health, Compliance Management Unit, Bin C-76, P.O. Box 6320, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6320, within sixty (60) days from the date of filing of the Final Order accepting this Agreement ("Final Order"). **All fines shall be paid by cashier's check or money order.** Any change in the terms of payment of any fine imposed by the Board **must be approved in advance by the Probation Committee of the Board.**

RESPONDENT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE TIMELY PAYMENT OF THE FINE IS HER LEGAL OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPONDENT AGREES TO CEASE PRACTICING IF THE FINE IS NOT PAID AS AGREED IN THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT. SPECIFICALLY, IF RESPONDENT HAS NOT RECEIVED WRITTEN CONFIRMATION WITHIN 75 DAYS OF THE DATE OF FILING OF THE FINAL ORDER THAT THE FULL AMOUNT OF THE FINE HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE BOARD OFFICE, RESPONDENT AGREES TO CEASE PRACTICE UNTIL RESPONDENT RECEIVES SUCH WRITTEN CONFIRMATION FROM THE BOARD.

3. **Reimbursement of Costs** - Pursuant to Section 456.072, Florida Statutes, Respondent agrees to pay the Department for the Department's costs incurred in the investigation and prosecution of this case ("Department costs"). Such costs exclude the costs of obtaining supervision or monitoring of the practice, the cost of quality assurance reviews, any other costs Respondent incurs to comply with the Final Order, and the Board's administrative costs directly associated with Respondent's probation, if any. Respondent agrees that the amount of Department costs to be paid in this case is ***Three Hundred Twenty-Six Dollars and Sixty-One Cents (\$326.61)***, but shall not exceed ***Two Thousand Three Hundred Twenty-Six Dollars and Sixty-One Cents (\$2,326.61)***. Respondent will pay such Department costs to: Payments, Department of Health, Compliance Management Unit, Bln C-76, P.O. Box 6320, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6320, within sixty (60) days from the date of filing of the Final Order. **All costs shall be paid by cashier's check or money order.** Any change in the terms of payment of

costs imposed by the Board must be approved in advance by the Probation Committee of the Board.

RESPONDENT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE TIMELY PAYMENT OF THE COSTS IS HER LEGAL OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPONDENT AGREES TO CEASE PRACTICING IF THE COSTS ARE NOT PAID AS AGREED IN THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT. SPECIFICALLY, IF RESPONDENT HAS NOT RECEIVED WRITTEN CONFIRMATION WITHIN 75 DAYS OF THE DATE OF FILING OF THE FINAL ORDER THAT THE FULL AMOUNT OF THE COSTS NOTED ABOVE HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE BOARD OFFICE, RESPONDENT AGREES TO CEASE PRACTICE UNTIL RESPONDENT RECEIVES SUCH WRITTEN CONFIRMATION FROM THE BOARD.

4. **Laws And Rules Course** - Respondent shall document completion of a Board-approved laws and rules course within one (1) year from the date the Final Order is filed.

5. **Continuing Medical Education – "Risk Management"** – Respondent shall complete this requirement and document such completion within one (1) year from the date the Final Order is filed. **Respondent shall satisfy this requirement in one of the two following ways:**

(a) Respondent shall complete five (5) hours of CME in "Risk Management" after first obtaining written advance approval from the Board's Probation Committee of such proposed course, and shall submit documentation of such completion,

In the form of certified copies of the receipts, vouchers, certificates, or other official proof of completion, to the Board's Probation Committee; or

(b) Respondent shall complete (5) five hours of CME in risk management by attending one full day or eight (8) hours, whichever is more, of disciplinary hearings at a regular meeting of the Board of Medicine. In order to receive such credit, Respondent must sign in with the Executive Director of the Board before the meeting day begins, Respondent must remain in continuous attendance during the full day or eight (8) hours of disciplinary hearings, whichever is more, and Respondent must sign out with the Executive Director of the Board at the end of the meeting day or at such other earlier time as affirmatively authorized by the Board. Respondent may not receive CME credit in risk management for attending the disciplinary hearings portion of a Board meeting unless the Respondent is attending the disciplinary hearings portion for the **sole** purpose of obtaining the CME credit in risk management. In other words, Respondent may not receive such credit if appearing at the Board meeting for any other purpose, such as pending action against Respondent's medical license.

STANDARD PROVISIONS

1. **Appearance** - Respondent is required to appear before the Board at the meeting of the Board where this Agreement is considered.
2. **No Force or Effect until Final Order** - It is expressly understood that this Agreement is subject to the approval of the Board and the Department. In this regard, the foregoing paragraphs (and only the foregoing paragraphs) shall have no force

and effect unless the Board enters a Final Order incorporating the terms of this Agreement.

3. **Continuing Medical Education** - Unless otherwise provided in this Agreement Respondent shall first submit a written request to the Probation Committee for approval prior to performance of said CME course(s). Respondent shall submit documentation to the Board's Probation Committee of having completed a CME course in the form of certified copies of the receipts, vouchers, certificates, or other papers, such as physician's recognition awards, documenting completion of this medical course within one (1) year of the filing of the Final Order in this matter. All such documentation shall be sent to the Board's Probation Committee, regardless of whether some or any of such documentation was provided previously during the course of any audit or discussion with counsel for the Department. CME hours required by this Agreement shall be in addition to those hours required for renewal of licensure. Unless otherwise approved by the Board's Probation Committee, such CME course(s) shall consist of a formal, live lecture format.

4. **Addresses** - Respondent must provide current residence and practice addresses to the Board. Respondent shall notify the Board in writing within ten (10) days of any changes of said addresses

5. **Future Conduct** - In the future, Respondent shall not violate Chapter 456, 458 or 893, Florida Statutes, or the rules promulgated pursuant thereto, or any other state or federal law, rule, or regulation relating to the practice or the ability to practice medicine to include, but not limited to, all statutory requirements related to practitioner

profile and licensure renewal updates. Prior to signing this agreement, the Respondent shall read Chapters 456, 458 and 893 and the Rules of the Board of Medicine, at Chapter 64B8, Florida Administrative Code.

6. **Violation of Terms** - It is expressly understood that a violation of the terms of this Agreement shall be considered a violation of a Final Order of the Board, for which disciplinary action may be initiated pursuant to Chapters 456 and 458, Florida Statutes.

7. **Purpose of Agreement** - Respondent, for the purpose of avoiding further administrative action with respect to this cause, executes this Agreement. In this regard, Respondent authorizes the Board to review and examine all investigative file materials concerning Respondent prior to or in conjunction with consideration of the Agreement. Respondent agrees to support this Agreement at the time it is presented to the Board and shall offer no evidence, testimony or argument that disputes or contravenes any stipulated fact or conclusion of law. Furthermore, should this Agreement not be accepted by the Board, it is agreed that presentation to and consideration of this Agreement and other documents and matters by the Board shall not unfairly or illegally prejudice the Board or any of its members from further participation, consideration or resolution of these proceedings.

8. **No Preclusion Of Additional Proceedings** - Respondent and the Department fully understand that this Agreement and subsequent Final Order will in no way preclude additional proceedings by the Board and/or the Department against

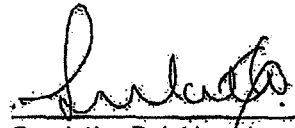
Respondent for acts or omissions not specifically set forth in the Administrative Complaint attached as Exhibit A.

9. **Waiver Of Attorney's Fees And Costs** - Upon the Board's adoption of this Agreement, the parties hereby agree that with the exception of Department costs noted above, the parties will bear their own attorney's fees and costs resulting from prosecution or defense of this matter. Respondent waives the right to seek any attorney's fees or costs from the Department and the Board in connection with this matter.

10. **Waiver of Further Procedural Steps** - Upon the Board's adoption of this Agreement, Respondent expressly waives all further procedural steps and expressly waives all rights to seek judicial review of or to otherwise challenge or contest the validity of the Agreement and the Final Order of the Board incorporating said Agreement.

[Signatures appear on the following page.]

SIGNED this 01st day of Oct., 2018.


Sreelatha Pulakhandam M.D.

STATE OF ~~FLORIDA~~ LA
COUNTY OF St. Tammany

BEFORE ME personally appeared Sreelatha Pulakhandam, whose identity is known to me or who produced LA DL (type of identification) and who, under oath, acknowledges that her signature appears above. For a settlement agreement.

SWORN TO and subscribed before me this 01 day of Oct., 2018.



NOTARY PUBLIC

Salvadore A. Mordillaro, II
Notary Public for Life
Parish of St. Tammany, LA
Notary ID #88161

My Commission Expires:

APPROVED this 2nd day of October, 2018.

Celeste Phillip, MD, MPH
Surgeon General and Secretary

By: 
Virginia Edwards
Assistant General Counsel
Department of Health

**STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,

PETITIONER,

v.

CASE NO. 2017-19955

SREELATHA PULAKHANDAM, M.D.,

RESPONDENT.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT

Petitioner Department of Health files this Administrative Complaint before the Board of Medicine against Respondent Sreelatha Pulakhandam, M.D., and alleges:

1. Petitioner is the state agency charged with regulating the practice of Medicine pursuant to Section 20.43, Florida Statutes; Chapter 456, Florida Statutes; and Chapter 458, Florida Statutes.

2. At all times material to this Complaint, Respondent was a licensed medical doctor within the state of Florida, having been issued license number ME 100632.

3. Respondent's address of record is 680 Millikens Bend, Covington, LA, 70433.

4. On or about October 16, 2017, the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners took action against the Respondent's Louisiana medical license in Consent Order 2016-I-585 due to Respondent allegedly directing clinical staff to fill out pre-signed prescriptions and complete medical records for patients while Respondent was out of the country, and for falsifying records to indicate medical exams were performed by Respondent when Respondent was out of the county.

5. The Consent Order placed Respondent on probation for one year, requiring supervision and the submission of quarterly reports; requires the completion of courses on professionalism, ethics, and proper prescribing; requires 50 hours of continued medical education; and assessed a fine of five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

6. The October 16, 2017 Consent Order was offered in response to or in anticipation of the filing of administrative charges against Respondent's license to practice medicine in Louisiana.

7. Respondent did not report the Louisiana Board action to the Florida Board of Medicine, in writing, within thirty (30) days.

8. Respondent did not update her practitioner profile with the Louisiana Board action within fifteen (15) days.

Count I

9. Petitioner re-alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs one (1) through six (6), as if fully set forth herein.

10. Section 458.331(1)(b), Florida Statutes (2017), provides that having a license or the authority to practice medicine revoked, suspended, or otherwise acted against, including the denial of licensure, by the licensing authority of any jurisdiction, including its agencies or subdivisions, constitutes grounds for disciplinary action by the Board of Medicine. The licensing authority's acceptance of a Consent Order shall be construed as action against the physician's license.

11. On or about October 16, 2017, the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners took action against the Respondent's Louisiana medical license via Consent Order 2016-I-585.

12. Based on the foregoing, respondent has violated Section 458.331(1)(b), Florida Statutes (2017), by having her Louisiana medical license acted against by the licensing authority of Louisiana.

Count II

13. Petitioner re-alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs one (1) through seven (7), as if fully set forth herein.

14. Section 458.331(1)(kk), Florida Statutes (2017), provides that failing to report to the Board of Medicine, in writing, within 30 days, when action, as defined in Section 458.331(1)(b), Florida Statutes, is taken against one's license to practice as a physician in another state, territory or country, constitutes grounds for discipline by the Board of Medicine.

15. Respondent failed to report the October 16, 2017, action taken against her Louisiana medical license by Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners to the Florida Board of Medicine, in writing, within 30 days.

16. Based on the foregoing, Respondent has violated Section 458.331(1)(kk), Florida Statutes (2017).

Count III

17. Petitioner re-alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs one (1) through eight (8), as if fully set forth herein.

18. Section 456.072(1)(w), Florida Statutes (2017), provides that failing to comply with the requirements for profiling and credentialing, including but not limited to, failing to provide initial information, failing to timely provide updated information, or making misleading, untrue, deceptive, or fraudulent representations on a profile, credentialing, or initial

or renewal licensure application constitutes grounds for discipline by the Board of Medicine.

19. Respondent failed to update her practitioner profile to reflect the October 16, 2017 action taken against her Louisiana medical license by Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners.

20. Based on the foregoing, Respondent has violated Section 456.072(1)(w), Florida Statutes (2017).

WHEREFORE, the Petitioner respectfully requests that the Board of Medicine enter an order imposing one or more of the following penalties: permanent revocation or suspension of Respondent's license, restriction of practice, imposition of an administrative fine, issuance of a reprimand, placement of the Respondent on probation, corrective action, refund of fees billed or collected, remedial education and/or any other relief that the Board deems appropriate.

[Signature appears on the following page.]

SIGNED this 21st day of May, 2018.

Celeste Phillip, MD, MPH
Surgeon General and Secretary

Virginia Edwards

Virginia Edwards
Assistant General Counsel
Florida Bar Number 1003243
DOH-Prosecution Services Unit
4052 Bald Cypress Way-Bin C-65
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3265
Telephone: (850) 558-9892
Facsimile: (850) 245-4684
Email: Virginia.Edwards@flhealth.gov

FILED
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DEPUTY CLERK
CLERK Amber Greene
DATE MAY 21 2018

PCP Date: May 18, 2018

PCP Members: Georges El-Bahri, M.D.; Sarvam TerKonda, M.D.; Brigette Goersch

NOTICE OF RIGHTS

Respondent has the right to request a hearing to be conducted in accordance with Section 120.569 and 120.57, Florida Statutes, to be represented by counsel or other qualified representative, to present evidence and argument, to call and cross-examine witnesses and to have subpoena and subpoena duces tecum issued on his or her behalf if a hearing is requested.

A request or petition for an administrative hearing must be in writing and must be received by the Department within 21 days from the day Respondent received the Administrative Complaint, pursuant to Rule 28-106.111(2), Florida Administrative Code. If Respondent fails to request a hearing within 21 days of receipt of this Administrative Complaint, Respondent waives the right to request a hearing on the facts alleged in this Administrative Complaint pursuant to Rule 28-106.111(4), Florida Administrative Code. Any request for an administrative proceeding to challenge or contest the material facts or charges contained in the Administrative Complaint must conform to Rule 28-106.2015(5), Florida Administrative Code.

Mediation under Section 120.573, Florida Statutes, is not available to resolve this Administrative Complaint.

NOTICE REGARDING ASSESSMENT OF COSTS

Respondent is placed on notice that Petitioner has incurred costs related to the investigation and prosecution of this matter. Pursuant to Section 456.072(4), Florida Statutes, the Board shall assess costs related to the investigation and prosecution of a disciplinary matter, which may include attorney hours and costs, on the Respondent in addition to any other discipline imposed.