

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BEFORE THE STATE BOARD OF MEDICINE**

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Bureau of Professional and
Occupational Affairs**

vs.

**Ashok J. Bharucha, MD,
Respondent**

Case No.:

**19-49-018532
20-49-007923
21-49-017705**

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER

PARTIES

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs ("Commonwealth") and **Ashok J. Bharucha, MD** ("Respondent") stipulate as follows in settlement of the above-captioned case.

APPLICABLE LAW

1. This matter is before the State Board of Medicine ("Board") pursuant to the Medical Practice Act of 1985, act of December 20, 1985, P.L. 457, No. 112, ("Act"), *as amended*, 63 P.S. §§ 422.1-422.53; the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error ("Mcare") Act, Act of March 20, 2002, P.L. 154, No. 13, *as amended*, 40 P.S. §§ 1303.101-1303.910; and/or 63 Pa.C.S. §§ 3101-3118.

LICENSURE STATUS

2. At all relevant and material times, Respondent held the following license to practice as a Medical Physician and Surgeon under the authority of the Board in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: license no. MD070573L, which was originally issued on March 7, 2000, and expired as of December 31, 2024.

Prothonotary Filed On:
Nov 07 2024 03:03 PM
Department of State

STIPULATED FACTS

3. The Respondent, while admitting no guilt or wrongdoing, understands that if the above captioned case were to proceed to a hearing the Commonwealth would present evidence in support of and/or to prove the following as it relates solely to the laws governing the Respondent's license to practice a profession governed by the Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs:

a. Absent additional Board action, Respondent's license may be continually reactivated, renewed, or reinstated upon the filing of the appropriate documentation and payment of the necessary fees.

b. Respondent's last known office address, as on file with the Board is: 143 Edgewood Drive W, South Abington Township, PA 18411.

c. On June 25, 2020, Respondent was arrested and charged with one (1) criminal count of Sexual Assault (F2), in violation of 18 Pa. C.S.A. §3124(1), and two (2) criminal counts of Indecent Assault (M2), in violation of 18 Pa. C.S.A. §3126(a)(1), in Centre County, Pennsylvania, docketed to MJ-49101-CR-0000091-2020.¹

d. On or about September 20, 2021, a Criminal Information was filed in Centre County Court of Common Pleas at Criminal Docket No. CP-14-CR-0000662-2020, which charged the Respondent with one (1) count of Simple Assault (M2), in violation of 18 Pa. C.S.A. §2701(a)(1)².

¹ The Respondent's license was immediately and temporarily suspended from July 2, 2020 through February 11, 2021 based on the aforementioned criminal charges and underlying facts following a hearing and issuance of an order by the Hearing Examiner in File No. 20-49-007717.

² It should be noted that the alleged victim in the aforementioned criminal case was a patient of the Respondent at the time of the underlying substantive actions occurred.

e. Also, on or about September 20, 2021, the Respondent entered into a Guilty Plea to one (1) count of Simple Assault (M2), in violation of 18 Pa. C.S.A. §2701(a)(1), and was sentenced to two (2) years of probation, payment of costs, payment of a \$500.00 fine, pay restitution to VCAP in the amount of \$1,000.00, and was to have no contact with the victim.³

(1) Respondent currently has pending before the Centre County Court a Post-Conviction Relief Act Petition based upon alleged ineffective assistance of counsel, in which Respondent seeks to vacate the guilty plea. However, even if the guilty plea is vacated, Respondent agrees in this administrative proceeding to be bound by the terms and conditions of the Proposed order.

f. On or about November 2, 2022, the Respondent entered into an agreement with the New Hampshire Board of Medicine, Docket No. 20-MED-008, to voluntarily surrendered his license to practice as a physician and surgeon issued by the New Hampshire Board of Medicine, license # 10320, in order to settle allegations pending before the New Hampshire Board of Medicine for misconduct pursuant to N. H. Code Admin. R. Med. 412.03.

g. The Respondent has engaged in violations of the physician-patient boundaries by purchasing/providing gifts, including alcohol, the use of a vehicle, and allowing the use of one of the Respondent's residences for/by at least one patient.

³ The other charges identified in Paragraph 3(c) of this Agreement were not pressed.

AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD

4. The Board is authorized to suspend or revoke, or otherwise restrict Respondent's license under sections 41 and 42 of the Act, 63 P.S. §§ 422.41 & 422.42; or impose a civil penalty under Section 908 of the Mcare Act, 40 P.S. §§ 1303.908, and/or 63 Pa.C.S. § 3108(b)(4); and/or impose the costs of investigation under 63 Pa.C.S. § 3108(b)(5).

SUMMARY OF DISCIPLINE

5. The following encapsulates the discipline as set forth in the Proposed Order:
- Respondent agrees to the voluntary surrender of his license to practice as a physician and surgeon.

PROPOSED ORDER

6. The parties, intending to be legally bound, consent to the issuance of the following Order in settlement of this matter:

a. **VIOLATIONS:** Respondent violated the Act at:

(1) 63 P.S. § 422.41(8), in that Respondent engaged in immoral or unprofessional conduct;

(2) 63 P.S. § 422.41(4), in that Respondent had a license or other authorization to practice the profession revoked or suspended or had other disciplinary action taken, or an application for a license or other authorization refused, revoked, or suspended by a proper licensing authority of another state, territory, possession or country, or a branch of the Federal Government, and

(3) in that Respondent was convicted of one (1) count of Simple Assault (M2), in violation of 18 Pa. C.S.A.

§2701(a)(1), which is a crime directly related to Respondent's occupation, trade or profession, and based on the nature of the crime, in accordance with 63 Pa.C.S. § 3113(b)(2), Respondent poses a substantial risk to the health and safety of the individual's patients or clients or the public or a substantial risk of further criminal convictions.

VOLUNTARY SURRENDER

b. In consideration for not imposing other disciplinary sanctions (which could include the revocation of Respondent's license to practice as a physician and surgeon as well as the imposition of civil penalties and/or the costs of investigation), the Parties propose, and the Board hereby accepts, the **VOLUNTARY SURRENDER** of Respondent's license to practice as a physician and surgeon in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, along with any other licenses, registrations, certificates, approvals, authorizations, or permits (hereinafter referred to collectively as "authorizations to practice the profession") issued by the Board to Respondent at the time this Consent Agreement is adopted by the Board. Respondent acknowledges that with the voluntary surrender of his authorizations to practice the profession, Respondent is surrendering any and all property rights he may have in those authorizations to practice the profession and will no longer be eligible to renew those authorizations to practice the profession. The Respondent recognizes that the voluntary surrender of his license has the legal effect of a revocation of said license.

c. The surrender of the Respondent's license shall become effective thirty (30) days following the Board's signed approval of the Agreement in order

to allow the Respondent sufficient time to wrap up his practice and provide for the continuation of care of the remainder of his patients.

d. As further stated, in consideration for the Commonwealth not seeking other disciplinary sanctions against Respondent, Respondent agrees to:

(1) cease practicing as a physician and surgeon in the Commonwealth on and after the effective date of this Consent Agreement, and shall not indicate any ability to practice the profession in the Commonwealth in any manner whatsoever in the future unless the Respondent has been issued a new license by the Board,

(2) Unless otherwise specified in this agreement, Respondent agrees to not apply, at any time in the future, for the reactivation, reinstatement, reissuance, or the issuance of any authorization to practice issued by the Board and further directs that the board should not consider, and may deny without hearing, any application for an authorization to practice filed with the Board before a minimum period of five (5) years from the date of the approval of the within Agreement has lapsed,

(3) not work as an unlicensed assistant to any person holding an authorization from the Board to practice the profession,

(4) not possess a controlling interest in any organization requiring an authorization from the Board to practice the profession,

(5) not possess a controlling interest in any organization whose employees require an authorization from the Board to practice the profession when conducting the business of the organization,

e. For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'controlling interest' shall include being an owner, officer, manager, director, partner, member, or associate, as well as owning any quantity of outstanding corporate stock sufficient to control or direct the actions of the firm.

f. Respondent shall, within ten (10) days of adoption of this Consent Agreement and Order, surrender Respondent's wall certificate, biennial renewal certificate, and wallet card (or notarized affidavit of their loss or destruction) by mailing them to:

Jason Anderson
Prosecuting Attorney
Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs
P.O. Box 69521
Harrisburg, PA 17106-9521

g. Respondent's failure to fully comply with any terms of this Agreement may also constitute grounds for additional disciplinary action.

h. Respondent shall bear the responsibility of all costs incurred by Respondent in complying with the terms of this Order, including production of records.

i. This Order constitutes disciplinary action by the Board and shall be reported to other licensing authorities and any applicable national licensing databank as a disciplinary action by the Board.

j. Nothing in this Agreement shall preclude the prosecuting attorney for the Commonwealth from filing charges or the Board from imposing disciplinary or corrective measures for violations or facts not contained in this Agreement.

k. These cases shall be deemed settled and discontinued upon the Board issuing an Order adopting this Consent Agreement.

ADMISSIBILITY OF CONSENT AGREEMENT IN FUTURE PROCEEDINGS

7. Respondent agrees that this Consent Agreement and Order shall be admitted into evidence, without objection, in any proceeding before the Department of State.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF NOTICE AND WAIVER OF HEARING

8. Respondent waives the filing of an Order to Show Cause in this matter. Respondent knowingly and voluntarily waives the right to an administrative hearing in this matter and the following rights related to that hearing: to be represented by counsel; to present witnesses and testimony in defense or in mitigation of any sanction that may be imposed for a violation; to cross-examine witnesses and to challenge evidence presented by the Commonwealth; to present legal arguments by means of a brief; and to take an appeal from any adverse final decision.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RIGHT TO ATTORNEY

9. Respondent acknowledges the right to consult with and be represented by private legal counsel of Respondent's choosing and at Respondent's expense when reviewing, considering, and accepting the terms of this Consent Agreement. To the extent that Respondent is not represented by legal counsel, Respondent has knowingly elected to proceed without the assistance of legal counsel.

WAIVER OF CLAIMS

10. Should the Board vote not to adopt the Order proposed in this Consent Agreement, the presentation and consideration of this Consent Agreement shall not prejudice the Board or any of its members from further participation in the adjudication of this matter. Respondent expressly waives the right to raise any claims or issues, including any and all constitutional claims or issues, which may arise or have arisen during the review, presentation and deliberation of this Consent Agreement. These claims or issues include, but are not limited to, bias, the commingling of prosecutorial and adjudicative functions by the Board or its counsel, and the Board, in its discretion, recommending a different sanction based upon the facts set forth in the Consent Agreement. If a hearing is subsequently held, neither this Consent Agreement nor the proposed terms of settlement may be admitted into evidence and any facts, averments, and allegations contained in the Consent Agreement must be proven at a hearing unless otherwise separately stipulated.

LIMITS ON MODIFICATION OF ORDER

11. Respondent agrees not to seek modification of the Order adopting and implementing this Consent Agreement without first obtaining the express written permission from the prosecution division. Any modification is at the sole discretion of the Board.

AGREEMENT NOT BINDING UNTIL APPROVED

12. This Consent Agreement is between the Commonwealth and Respondent. The Office of General Counsel has approved this Consent Agreement as to form and legality. The disciplinary provisions of this Consent Agreement do not take effect unless and until the Board issues an order adopting this Consent Agreement.

ENTIRE AGREEMENT

13. This Consent Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties. There are no other terms, obligations, covenants, representations, statements, or conditions, oral or otherwise, of any kind whatsoever concerning this agreement.

AGREEMENT DOES NOT PREVENT FUTURE DISCIPLINE

14. Nothing in this Order shall preclude the prosecution division of the Department of State from filing charges, or the Board from imposing disciplinary or corrective measures, for violations or facts not contained in this Consent Agreement.

VERIFICATION OF FACTS AND STATEMENTS

15. Respondent verifies that the facts and statements set forth in this Consent Agreement are true and correct to the best of Respondent's knowledge, information, and belief. Respondent understands that statements in this Consent Agreement are made subject to the criminal penalties of 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904 relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

/s/ Jason Anderson

Jason Anderson
Prosecuting Attorney

DATED: 10/10/24



Ashok J. Bharucha, MD
Respondent

DATED: 10/7/2024

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vs.

**Ashok J. Bharucha, MD,
Respondent**

ORDER

AND NOW, this 5th day of November 2024, the **STATE BOARD OF MEDICINE** ("Board") approves and adopts the foregoing Consent Agreement and incorporates the terms of the Consent Agreement, which shall constitute the Board's Order and is now issued in resolution of this matter.

This Order shall take effect immediately.

**BUREAU OF PROFESSIONAL AND
OCCUPATIONAL AFFAIRS**



Arion R. Claggett
Acting Commissioner

For the Commonwealth:

For the Respondent:

Date:

**BY ORDER:
STATE BOARD OF MEDICINE**



Mark B. Woodland, M.S., M.D.
Chair

Jason Anderson, Esquire
Prosecuting Attorney
P.O. Box 69521
Harrisburg, PA 17106-9521

Ashok J. Bharucha
c/o James J. Kutz, Esq.
17 North Second St., 12th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

11/8/2024