

BEFORE THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF MEDICINE

IN RE: JEFFREY HALE MORSE, M.D.
License Number: 0101-035684
Case Number: 179956

CONSENT ORDER

JURISDICTION AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Virginia Board of Medicine ("Board") and Jeffrey Hale Morse, M.D., as evidenced by their signatures hereto, in lieu of proceeding to an informal conference, enter into the following Consent Order affecting Dr. Morse's license to practice Medicine and Surgery in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Jeffrey Hale Morse, M.D., was issued License Number 0101-035684 to practice Medicine and Surgery on July 14, 1983, which is scheduled to expire on March 31, 2020.

2. Dr. Morse violated Virginia Code § 54.1-2915(A)(3), (13), and (16) from approximately November 2015 through March 2017 with regard to his care and treatment of Patient A, a then 41-year-old female with a history of Schizoaffective Disorder, Panic Disorder, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), who was taking high doses of multiple benzodiazepines when Dr. Morse assumed her medication management. Specifically:

a. At Patient A's first visit with Dr. Morse on November 13, 2015, she informed Dr. Morse she was taking alprazolam 8mg/day (recommended daily dose 4mg/day), clonazepam 8mg/day (recommended daily dose 4mg/day), and chlorthalidone 30mg/day (the maximum daily dose), as well as antipsychotic, antidepressant, and mood stabilizing agents. Although taking multiple benzodiazepines is against sound medical advice, and Patient A admitted at the first visit that she had stopped taking all medications except for benzodiazepines because she felt it was "most important" to keep her anxiety under control, Dr. Morse failed to recognize that

Patient A's over reliance on benzodiazepines had likely caused Patient A to have significant habituation/withdrawal that exacerbated the psychiatric conditions the medications were intended to treat. At the visit, rather than addressing that the habituation/withdrawal was overshadowing Patient A's other psychiatric conditions, Dr. Morse continued Patient A on high doses of multiple benzodiazepines and focused solely on controlling the patient's Schizoaffective Disorder.

b. Although Patient A's anxiety did not show improvement while under the care of Dr. Morse, and her prior treatment records that Dr. Morse reviewed also showed no improvement in spite of years' long treatment with high dose benzodiazepines, Dr. Morse continued to prescribe Patient A high doses of multiple benzodiazepines during the entire treatment period.

c. In spite of having a treatment contract with Patient A, Dr. Morse failed to take action and continued prescribing multiple benzodiazepines and other sedative-hypnotics with high abuse potential when Patient A violated the contract regularly and acted in a manner suggesting he knew or should have known that Patient A was over using/abusing the medications. Specifically, Dr. Morse failed to act even though Patient A repeatedly sought medication changes, requesting specific medications and doses, at appointments and via telephone calls; frequently admitted to taking medications more frequently than prescribed; regularly attempted to have pharmacies refill medications that Dr. Morse had stopped prescribing; and obtained opioids from emergency rooms and other providers on 11 separate occasions during the treatment period.

CONSENT

Jeffrey Hale Morse, M.D., by affixing his signature to this Consent Order, agrees to the following:

1. I have been advised to seek advice of counsel prior to signing this document and am represented by John Franklin, III, Esq.;
2. I am fully aware that without my consent, no legal action can be taken against me or my license except pursuant to the Virginia Administrative Process Act, Virginia Code § 2.2-4000 *et seq.*;
3. I acknowledge that I have the following rights, among others: the right to an informal fact-finding conference before the Board; and the right to representation by counsel;
4. I waive my right to an informal conference;
5. I admit to the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law contained herein and waive my right to contest such Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and any sanction imposed hereunder in any future judicial or administrative proceeding in which the Board is a party;
6. I consent to the entry of the following Order affecting my license to practice Medicine and Surgery in the Commonwealth of Virginia.


ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Virginia Board of Medicine hereby **ORDERS** as follows:

1. Jeffrey Hale Morse, M.D., is **REPRIMANDED**.
2. Within six (6) months, Dr. Morse shall submit proof satisfactory to the Board of completion of at least fifteen (15) hours of a Board-approved continuing medical education ("CME") course(s) in the subject of prescribing controlled substances. Such CME shall be approved in advance of registration by the Executive Director of the Board, and shall be completed through face-to-face, interactive sessions (i.e., no home study, journal, or Internet courses). Any CME hours obtained in compliance with this term shall not be used toward compliance with the Board's continuing education requirements for license renewal.

Pursuant to Virginia Code §§ 2.2-4023 and 54.1-2400.2, the signed original of this Order shall remain in the custody of the Department of Health Professions as a public record, and shall be made available for public inspection and copying upon request.

FOR THE BOARD


Jennifer Deschenes, J.D., M.S.
Deputy Executive Director
Virginia Board of Medicine

ENTERED: 4/1/19

SEEN AND AGREED TO:



Jeffrey Hale Morse, M.D.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY/CITY OF Virginia Beach, TO WIT:

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a notary public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia at large,
on this 22nd day of MARCH, 2019.



My commission expires:


Notary Public

Registration No.:

276962