



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: John C. Sindorf, MD
Master Case No. M2009-1471

Document: Statement of Allegations

Regarding your request for information about the above-named practitioner, certain information may have been withheld pursuant to Washington state laws. While those laws require that most records be disclosed on request, they also state that certain information should not be disclosed.

The following information has been withheld:

The identity of the complainant if the person is a consumer, health care provider, or employee, pursuant to RCW 43.70.075 (Identity of Whistleblower Protected) and/or the identity of a patient, pursuant to RCW 70.02.020 (Medical Records - Health Care Information Access and Disclosure)

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the information that was withheld, please contact:

Customer Service Center
P.O. Box 47865
Olympia, WA 98504-7865
Phone: (360) 236-4700
Fax: (360) 586-2171

You may appeal the decision to withhold any information by writing to the Deputy Secretary, Department of Health, P.O. Box 47890, Olympia, WA 98504-7890.

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of

JOHN C. SINDORF, MD
License No. MD00025790

Respondent

No. M2009-1471

**STATEMENT OF ALLEGATIONS
AND SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

The Disciplinary Manager of the Medical Quality Assurance Commission (Commission), on designation by the Commission, makes the allegations below, which are supported by evidence contained in program file number 2007-48916. The patients referred to in this Statement of Allegations and Summary of Evidence are identified in the attached Confidential Schedule.

1. ALLEGED FACTS

1.1 On August 11, 1988, the state of Washington issued Respondent a license to practice as a physician and surgeon. Respondent's license is currently active. Respondent is board-certified in psychiatry.

1.2 Respondent prescribed excessive doses and quantities of alprazolam (Xanax) for Patient A. Respondent gave Patient A prescriptions well before the previous prescription would have been used if taken at the high dose it was prescribed. Alprazolam is a benzodiazepine, an anti-anxiety medication that can be habit-forming. This excessive prescribing of a benzodiazepine was despite Patient A's apparent history of substance abuse and despite signs that Patient A was abusing the medication.

1.3 The Commission conducted a practice review. In the course of that practice review the Commission collected records for Patients B, C, and D. A review of these records revealed that Respondent also prescribed excessive doses and quantities of benzodiazepines for Patients B, C, and D. Respondent also failed to sufficiently examine these patients and did not order appropriate laboratory tests.

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2. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 Medical records pertaining to Patients A, B, C, and D, collected from Respondent.
- 2.2 Pharmacy profiles and prescription refill authorizations from Bartell Drugs and Rite Aid Pharmacy.
- 2.3 Letter of complaint from the father of Patient A, dated August 24, 2007.
- 2.4 Letter from Respondent to the Commission investigator, received January 22, 2008.

3. ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

3.1 The facts alleged in Section 1, if proven, would constitute unprofessional conduct in violation of RCW 18.130.180(4) which provides in part:

RCW 18.130.180 Unprofessional conduct. The following conduct, acts, or conditions constitute unprofessional conduct for any license holder or applicant under the jurisdiction of this chapter:

...

(4) Incompetence, negligence, or malpractice which results in injury to a patient or which creates an unreasonable risk that a patient may be harmed. The use of a nontraditional treatment by itself shall not constitute unprofessional conduct, provided that it does not result in injury to a patient or create an unreasonable risk that a patient may be harmed;

...

4. NOTICE TO RESPONDENT

4.1 The Commission has determined that this case may be appropriate for resolution through a Stipulation to Informal Disposition pursuant to RCW 18.130.172(2). A proposed Stipulation to Informal Disposition is attached, which contains the disposition the Commission believes is necessary to address the conduct alleged in this Statement of Allegations and Summary of Evidence.

4.2 If Respondent agrees that the disposition imposed by the Stipulation to Informal Disposition is appropriate, Respondent should sign and date the Stipulation to Informal Disposition and return it within fourteen (14) days to the Medical Quality Assurance Commission at PO Box 47866, Olympia, WA 98504-7866.

4.3 If Respondent does not agree that the terms and conditions contained in the Stipulation to Informal Disposition are appropriate, Respondent should contact Jim McLaughlin, Staff Attorney for the Medical Quality Assurance Commission, PO Box 47866, Olympia, WA 98504-7866, (360) 236-2790 within fourteen (14) days.

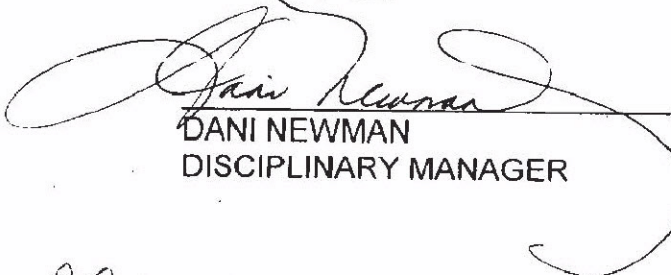
4.4 If Respondent does not respond within fourteen (14) days, the Commission will assume Respondent has declined to resolve the allegations by means of a Stipulation to Informal Disposition.

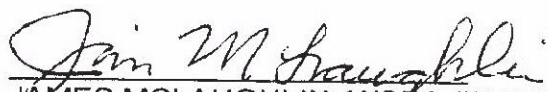
4.5 If Respondent declines to resolve the allegations by means of a Stipulation to Informal Disposition pursuant to RCW 18.130.172(2), the Commission may proceed to formal disciplinary action against Respondent by filing a Statement of Charges, pursuant to RCW 18.130.172(3).

4.6 The cover letter enclosed with this Statement of Allegations and Summary of Evidence was mailed to the name and address currently on file for Respondent's license. Respondent must notify, in writing, the Commission if Respondent's name and/or address changes.

DATED: December 14, 2009.

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
COMMISSION


DANI NEWMAN
DISCIPLINARY MANAGER


JAMES MCLAUGHLIN, WSBA #27349
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STAFF ATTORNEY

CONFIDENTIAL SCHEDULE

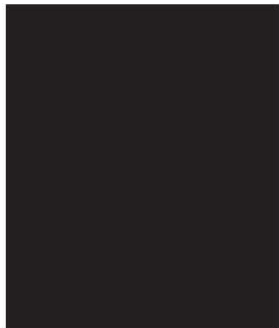
This information is confidential and is NOT to be released without the consent of the individual or individuals named herein. RCW 42.56.240(1)

Patient A

Patient B

Patient C

Patient D





STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: John C. Sindorf, MD
Master Case No. M2009-1471

Document: Stipulation to Informal Disposition

Regarding your request for information about the above-named practitioner, certain information may have been withheld pursuant to Washington state laws. While those laws require that most records be disclosed on request, they also state that certain information should not be disclosed.

The following information has been withheld: **NONE**

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the information that was withheld, please contact:

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Olympia, WA 98504-7865
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**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the License to Practice
as a Physician and Surgeon of

JOHN C. SINDORF, MD
License No. MD00025790

Respondent

No. M2009-1471

**STIPULATION TO INFORMAL
DISPOSITION**

1. STIPULATION

Pursuant to the Uniform Disciplinary Act, Chapter 18.130 RCW, the Medical Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) issued a Statement of Allegations and Summary of Evidence (Statement of Allegations) alleging the conduct described in paragraphs 1.1 through 1.3 below. Respondent does not admit any of the allegations.

1.1 On August 11, 1988, the state of Washington issued Respondent a license to practice as a physician and surgeon. Respondent's license is currently active. Respondent is board-certified in psychiatry.

1.2 Respondent prescribed excessive doses and quantities of alprazolam (Xanax) for Patient A. Respondent gave Patient A prescriptions well before the previous prescription would have been used if taken at the high dose it was prescribed. Alprazolam is a benzodiazepine, an anti-anxiety medication that can be habit-forming. This excessive prescribing of a benzodiazepine was despite Patient A's apparent history of substance abuse and despite signs that Patient A was abusing the medication.

1.3 The Commission conducted a practice review. In the course of that practice review the Commission collected records for Patients B, C, and D. A review of these records revealed that Respondent also prescribed excessive doses and quantities of benzodiazepines for Patients B, C, and D. Respondent also failed to either obtain the records of each patient's primary care provider, or to sufficiently examine these patients and order appropriate laboratory tests.

1.4 The Commission alleges that the conduct described above, if proven, would constitute a violation of RCW 18.130.180(4).

1.5 The parties wish to resolve this matter by means of a Stipulation to Informal Disposition (Stipulation), pursuant to RCW 18.130.172(1).

1.6 Respondent agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions of this Stipulation.

1.7 This Stipulation is of no force and effect and is not binding on the parties unless and until it is accepted by the Commission.

1.8 This Stipulation shall not be construed as a finding of unprofessional conduct or inability to practice.

1.9 This Stipulation is not formal disciplinary action. However, if the Commission accepts it, it will be reported to the Health Integrity and Protection Databank (45 CFR Part 61), and it may be reported to the National Practitioner Databank (45 CFR Part 60) and elsewhere as required by law.

1.10 The Statement of Allegations and this Stipulation are public documents and will be placed on the Department of Health's website. They are subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW, and shall remain part of Respondent's file according to the state's records retention law and cannot be expunged.

1.11 The Commission agrees to forego further disciplinary proceedings concerning the allegations.

1.12 Respondent agrees to successfully complete the terms and conditions of this informal disposition.

1.13 A violation of the provisions of Section 2 of this Stipulation, if proved, would constitute grounds for discipline under RCW 18.130.180 and the imposition of sanctions under RCW 18.130.160.

2. INFORMAL DISPOSITION

The Commission and Respondent stipulate to the following terms.

2.1 Respondent's license to practice as a physician and surgeon in the state of Washington is placed on PROBATION for a period of three years from the effective

date of this Stipulation. During the period of probation, Respondent shall comply with the following terms and conditions.

2.2 Within one year of the effective date of this Stipulation to Informal Disposition, Respondent will provide satisfactory proof to the Commission that he has completed a course pre-approved by the Commission or its designee regarding the prescribing of controlled substances. The course "Controlled Substance Management" at Case Western Reserve University, and the course "Prescribing Controlled Drugs" at Vanderbilt University are pre-approved.

2.3 Respondent will encourage patients to have a primary care provider (PCP) who follows their health care maintenance. Respondent will document whether a patient has a PCP. If the patient does have a PCP, Respondent will request and review the records of the PCP. If the patient does not have a primary care provider, Respondent will document his recommendation to the patient to obtain a primary care provider.

2.4 Respondent will keep legible and complete documentation of patient encounters. All charts will have a problem and a medication list. The medication list should clearly show the date, dosage, quantity, and the number of refills. Respondent will document treatment goals and any efforts to reduce habit-forming medications.

2.5 In order to monitor compliance with this Agreed Order, Respondent agrees that a representative of the Commission may make announced annual visits to conduct practice reviews. Practice reviews will include an inspection of Respondent's office and medical records, and interviews with Respondent, staff, and supervisors.

2.6 Upon Respondent's completion of the above terms and period of probation the Commission may terminate this Stipulation to Informal Disposition without petition or appearance by Respondent.

2.7 Respondent must obey all federal, state and local laws and all administrative rules governing the practice of the profession in Washington.

2.8 Respondent must assume all costs of complying with this Stipulation.

2.9 If Respondent violates any provision of this Stipulation in any respect, the Commission may take further action against Respondent's license.

2.10 Respondent must inform the Commission and the Adjudicative Clerk Office in writing, of changes in his residential and/or business address within thirty (30) days of such change.

2.11 The effective date of this Stipulation to Informal Disposition is the date the Adjudicative Clerk Office places the signed Stipulation into the U.S. mail. If required, Respondent shall not submit any fees or compliance documents until after the effective date of this Stipulation.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH SANCTION RULES

3.1 The Commission applies WAC 246-16-800, *et seq.*, to determine appropriate sanctions. The overprescribing of benzodiazepines involves a "moderate to severe" risk of harm, and therefore falls within Tier B of the "Practice Below Standard of Care" schedule found at WAC 246-16-810. The sanctions in Tier B range from two to five years of oversight with terms and conditions, or a permanent revocation.

3.2 The period of oversight in this Agreed Order is at the lower-middle portion of that range. The Commission uses aggravating and mitigating factors to move towards the maximum or minimum ends of the range. This position within the range of sanctions takes into account the mitigating fact that Respondent has been licensed since 1988 and has no prior disciplinary action or investigated complaints.


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4. RESPONDENT'S ACCEPTANCE

I, JOHN C. SINDORF, Respondent, certify that I have read this Stipulation to Informal Disposition in its entirety; that my counsel of record, Philip Vanderhoef, fully explained the legal significance and consequence of it; that I fully understand and agree to all of it; and that it may be presented to the Commission without my appearance. If the Commission accepts the Stipulation to Informal Disposition, I understand that I will receive a signed copy.



JOHN C. SINDORF
RESPONDENT

1/1/2010

DATE

PHILIP VANDERHOEF, WSBA #14564
ATTORNEY FOR RESPONDENT

DATE

5. COMMISSION'S ACCEPTANCE

The Commission accepts this Stipulation to Informal Disposition. All parties shall be bound by its terms and conditions.

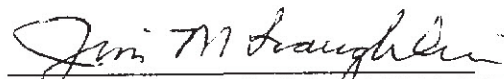
DATED: Jan 14, 2010.

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION



PANEL CHAIR

PRESENTED BY:



JAMES MCLAUGHLIN, WSBA #27349
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STAFF ATTORNEY



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: John C. Sindorf, MD
Master Case No.: M2009-1471
Document: Release from Informal Disposition

Regarding your request for information about the above-named practitioner; attached is a true and correct copy of the document on file with the State of Washington, Department of Health, Adjudicative Clerk Office. These records are considered Certified by the Department of Health.

Certain information may have been withheld pursuant to Washington state laws. While those laws require that most records be disclosed on request, they also state that certain information should not be disclosed.

The following information has been withheld:

Respondent's residential address, including street, city, and zip code pursuant to RCW 42.56.050, RCW 42.56.350(2)

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the information that was withheld, please contact:

Customer Service Center
P.O. Box 47865
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STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION
PO Box 47866, Olympia, WA 98504-7866

FILED
JAN 29 2013
Adjudicative Clerk

January 28, 2013

John C. Sindorf, MD


Re: Master Case No.: M2009-1471
Case No.: 2007-08-0120MD
ILRS Case No.: 2007-48916
Credential No.: MD00025790

Dear Dr. Sindorf:

This letter is to officially inform you and other interested parties that the Medical Quality Assurance Commission has released you from the requirements of the *Stipulation to Informal Disposition* signed on January 14, 2010. You have demonstrated satisfactory compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement. The Stipulation is terminated and you are now released from the requirements of the Stipulation effective upon receipt of this letter.

The Department of Health Medical Quality Assurance Commission wishes you well in your future endeavors as a physician and surgeon.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Bob Horner, Compliance Officer at (360) 236-2763 or write to the Department of Health, Medical Quality Assurance Commission, PO Box 47866, Olympia, WA 98504-7866.

Sincerely,



Mike Kramer
Compliance Officer

cc: Adjudicative Service Unit
Jim McLaughlin, Staff Attorney

