

IN THE MATTER OF

LELIN CHAO, M.D.

**Applicant for Reinstatement
after Surrender**

License Number: D57006

BEFORE THE

MARYLAND STATE

BOARD OF PHYSICIANS

Case Number 8826-0004

**ORDER ON APPLICATION FOR REINSTATEMENT
OF MEDICAL LICENSURE**

I. INTRODUCTION

On August 6, 2021, Lelin Chao, M.D. was charged under Md. Code Ann. § 14-404(a)(3)(ii) (unprofessional conduct in the practice of medicine); and Health Occ. § 14-404(a)(38) (by corrupt means, threats, or force, hinders, prevents, or otherwise delays any person from making information available to the Board or a disciplinary panel in furtherance of any investigation of the Board or a disciplinary panel). On August 18, 2022, Dr. Chao surrendered her license in lieu of further prosecution, which was accepted by Disciplinary Panel A (“Panel A” or the “Panel”) of the Maryland State Board of Physicians (the “Board”).

On January 17, 2026, Dr. Chao applied for the reinstatement of her license. The Board sought and Dr. Chao submitted answers to questions pertaining to her request for reinstatement on March 7, 2026. The Panel sought the State’s response to the application, and, on April 20, 2026, the Board received the State’s response to Dr. Chao’s Application for Reinstatement from the Administrative Prosecutor. On May 13, 2026, the Panel met with Dr. Chao and the Administrative Prosecutor to consider Dr. Chao’s application for the reinstatement of her license.

II. PROCEDURAL AND FACTUAL HISTORY

Dr. Chao was originally licensed to practice medicine in Maryland, on January 24, 2001. She was board-certified in Family Medicine, but her certification expired December 31, 2016. Prior to surrendering her license, Dr. Chao served as the medical director for a non-profit health care center in Baltimore, Maryland that provides behavioral health counseling, and individual, family, and group therapy.

On July 24, 2013, Dr. Chao and the Board entered into a consent order based on Dr. Chao's failure to cooperate with the Board's investigation, under Health Occ. § 14-404(a)(33). Dr. Chao was fined \$2,000. Dr. Chao satisfied the terms of the consent order.

On August 6, 2021, in a separate case, the Board charged Dr. Chao with unprofessional conduct in the practice of medicine, Health Occ. § 14-404(a)(3)(ii); and by corrupt means, threats, or force, hinders, prevents, or otherwise delays any person from making information available to the Board or a disciplinary panel in furtherance of any investigation of the Board or a disciplinary panel, Health Occ. § 14-404(a)(38). Dr. Chao was charged with diagnosing an individual with whom she had a long-term personal relationship and providing the individual with non-emergent care from 2008 to 2018, during which time she prescribed Controlled Dangerous Substances ("CDS") and other prescription medications to treat chronic medical conditions. According to the charges, Dr. Chao prescribed one non-opioid CDS to the individual 53 times, an opioid CDS on one occasion, and four different non-CDS medications. Dr. Chao also failed to perform screening tests or laboratory studies and failed to keep medical records for the care that she provided. The charges further alleged that her professional judgment and objectivity were compromised and that she directed the complainant to retract the complaint

against her and threatened retaliation if the complainant did not do so. The complainant withdrew his complaint.

In lieu of further prosecution, Dr. Chao surrendered her license, which was accepted by Panel A on August 18, 2022.

On January 17, 2026, Dr. Chao applied for reinstatement of her medical license. On May 13, 2026, Panel A met with Dr. Chao and the Administrative Prosecutor to consider Dr. Chao's application for the reinstatement of her license.

III. CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION

The reinstatement of a physician's medical license after licensure surrender is discretionary. *See* Health Occ. § 14-409; COMAR 10.32.02.06. In her current application for reinstatement, Dr. Chao has accepted full responsibility for her actions, acknowledged the significance of her violation, and demonstrated insight into her offenses. She described how she has "undertaken deliberate, structured and sustained remediation including: Structured self-study focused on professional boundaries and ethical decision making, further focused study in addictive medicine, intentional reflection and professional development, and engagement in psychotherapy." Dr. Chao maintained gainful employment in a role that did not involve direct patient care and helped to establish a primary care clinic at a recovery program in Baltimore. She has continued to complete continuing education credits to keep her medical knowledge up to date, including coursework related to accountable care organizations, addiction medicine, quality improvement, and coursework related to family practice. During her hiatus from clinical practice, Dr. Chao addressed the relationship and circumstances that contributed to her violation. The Panel believes that she is unlikely to repeat the conduct that led to the surrender of her license. The Panel, therefore, grants Dr. Chao's application for reinstatement, subject to a period

of probation and certain probationary conditions. Because her continuing education credits are largely unrelated to the conduct for which she surrendered her license, the Panel will require that she complete coursework related to ethics, Controlled Dangerous Substances, and boundaries, which all pertain to her violation. Because she surrendered her license and was never subject to a Board order, she never took any courses directly pertaining to her violation.

IV. ORDER

It is thus, by Disciplinary Panel A, hereby

ORDERED that Dr. Chao's license to practice medicine in Maryland is **REINSTATED**;

and it is further

ORDERED that Dr. Chao is **REPRIMANDED**; and it is further

ORDERED that Dr. Chao is placed on **PROBATION** for a minimum period of **ONE YEAR**. During the probationary period, Dr. Chao shall comply with the following probationary terms and conditions:

1. Within **SIX (6) MONTHS**, Dr. Chao is required to take and successfully complete a course in ethics, a course in Controlled Dangerous Substances prescribing, and a course in boundaries. The following terms apply:
 - (a) it is Dr. Chao's responsibility to locate, enroll in and obtain the disciplinary panel's approval of the courses before the courses begin;
 - (b) Dr. Chao must provide documentation to the disciplinary panel that she has successfully completed the courses;
 - (c) the courses may not be used to fulfill the continuing medical education credits required for license renewal;
 - (d) Dr. Chao is responsible for the cost of the courses.
2. During the probationary period, Disciplinary Panel A will issue administrative subpoenas to the Maryland Prescription Drug Monitoring Program on a quarterly basis for all of the Dr. Chao's CDS prescriptions. The administrative subpoenas will request a review of Dr. Chao's CDS prescriptions written from the beginning of each quarter;

3. Dr. Chao shall enroll in the Maryland Professional Rehabilitation Program (“MPRP”) as follows:

- (a) Within 5 business days, Dr. Chao shall contact MPRP to schedule an initial consultation for enrollment;
- (b) Within 15 business days, Dr. Chao shall enter into a Participant Rehabilitation Agreement and Participant Rehabilitation Plan with MPRP;
- (c) Dr. Chao shall fully and timely cooperate and comply with all MPRP’s referrals, rules, and requirements, including, but not limited to, the terms and conditions of the Participant Rehabilitation Agreement(s) and Participant Rehabilitation Plan(s) entered with MPRP, and shall fully participate and comply with all therapy, treatment, evaluations, and screenings as directed by MPRP;
- (d) Dr. Chao shall sign and update the written release/consent forms requested by the Board and MPRP, including release/consent forms to authorize MPRP to make verbal and written disclosures to the Board and to authorize the Board to disclose relevant information from MPRP records and files in a public order. Dr. Chao shall not withdraw her release/consent;
- (e) Dr. Chao shall also sign any written release/consent forms to authorize MPRP to exchange with (i.e., disclose to and receive from) outside entities (including all of Dr. Chao’s current therapists and treatment providers) verbal and written information concerning Dr. Chao and to ensure that MPRP is authorized to receive the medical records of Dr. Chao, including, but not limited to, mental health and drug or alcohol evaluation and treatment records. Dr. Chao shall not withdraw her release/consent;
- (f) Dr. Chao’s failure to comply with any of the above terms or conditions including terms or conditions of the Participant Rehabilitation Agreement(s) or Participant Rehabilitation Plan(s) constitutes a violation of this Order on Application for Reinstatement of Medical Licensure (“Reinstatement Order”);
- (g) If, upon the authorization of MPRP, Dr. Chao transfers to a rehabilitation program in another state, Dr. Chao’s failure to comply with any term or condition of that state’s rehabilitation program, constitutes a violation of this Reinstatement Order. Dr. Chao shall also sign any out-of-state written release/consent forms to authorize the Board to exchange with (i.e., disclose to and receive from) the out-of-state program verbal and written information concerning Dr. Chao, and to ensure that the Board is authorized to receive the medical records of Dr. Chao, including, but not limited to, mental health and drug and alcohol evaluation and treatment records. Dr. Chao shall not withdraw the release/consent; and it is further

ORDERED that a violation of probation constitutes a violation of this Reinstatement Order; and it is further

ORDERED that Dr. Chao may submit a written petition to Panel A requesting termination of her **PROBATION** after a minimum period of **ONE YEAR** and after she has fully

and satisfactorily complied with all terms and conditions of probation. Dr. Chao may be required to appear before Panel A to discuss her petition for termination of probation. Panel A will grant the petition to terminate the probation if Dr. Chao has complied with all of the probationary terms and conditions and there are no pending complaints related to the charges; and it is further

ORDERED that if Dr. Chao allegedly fails to comply with any term or condition of probation or this Reinstatement Order, Dr. Chao shall be given notice and an opportunity for a hearing. If there is a genuine dispute as to a material fact, the hearing shall be before an Administrative Law Judge of the Office of Administrative Hearings. If there is no genuine dispute as to a material fact, Dr. Chao shall be given a show cause hearing before a disciplinary panel; and it is further

ORDERED that, after the appropriate hearing, if the disciplinary panel determines that Dr. Chao has failed to comply with any term or condition of this Reinstatement Order, the disciplinary panel may reprimand Dr. Chao, place Dr. Chao on probation with appropriate terms and conditions, or suspend Dr. Chao's license with appropriate terms and conditions or revoke Dr. Chao's license to practice medicine in Maryland. The disciplinary panel may, in addition to one or more of the sanctions set forth above, impose a civil monetary fine upon Dr. Chao; and it is further

ORDERED that Dr. Chao is responsible for all costs incurred in fulfilling the terms and conditions of this Reinstatement Order; and it is further

ORDERED that Dr. Chao shall not apply for the early termination of probation; and it is further

ORDERED that any time period begins when this Reinstatement Order goes into effect. This Reinstatement Order goes into effect upon the signature of the Board's Deputy Director, who signs on behalf of the Panel; and it is further

ORDERED that this Reinstatement Order is a public document. *See* Health Occ. §§ 1-607, 14-411.1(b)(2) and Gen. Prov. § 4-333(b)(6).

6/1/2026
Date

Signature on File

Ellen Douglas Smith, Deputy Director
Maryland State Board of Physicians