

IN THE MATTER OF

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BEFORE THE

JACQUELINE Q. RIPPLE, ATC

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MARYLAND STATE

Respondent

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BOARD OF PHYSICIANS

License Number: A00676

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Case Number: 2223-0022B

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**ORDER FOR SUMMARY SUSPENSION OF ATHLETIC TRAINER LICENSE**

Disciplinary Panel B ("Panel B") of the Maryland State Board of Physicians (the "Board") hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDS** the athletic trainers license of **JACQUELINE Q. RIPPLE, ATC** (the "Respondent"), License Number A00676, in the State of Maryland.

Panel B takes such action pursuant to its authority under Md. Code Ann., State Gov't ("State Gov't") § 10-226(c)(2) (2021 Repl. Vol.) and Md. Code Regs. ("COMAR") 10.32.02.08B(7), concluding that the public health, safety, and welfare imperatively requires emergency action.

**INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS**

Based on information received by, and made known to Panel B, and the investigatory information obtained by, received by, and made known to and available to Panel B, including the instances described below, Panel B has reason to believe that the following facts are true:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The statements regarding the Respondent's conduct are intended to provide the Respondent with reasonable notice of the basis of Panel B's action. They are not intended as, and do not necessarily represent, a complete description of the evidence, either documentary or testimonial, to be offered against the Respondent in connection with this matter.

## **Introduction**

1. Panel B is summarily suspending the Respondent's athletic trainers license after a Board investigation revealed that she has a health condition that affects her ability to practice athletic training safely.

## **Background/Licensing Information**

2. The Respondent was originally issued an athletic trainers license in Maryland on September 12, 2014, under License Number A00676. The license expired on or about September 30, 2017.

3. On June 6, 2022, the Respondent filed an Application for Reinstatement of Athletic Trainers. The Respondent's license was reinstated on July 5, 2022.

4. The Respondent's license expires on September 30, 2023, subject to renewal.

5. The Respondent was also licensed in Tennessee on or about September 25, 2015. That license expired on or about January 31, 2018.

6. The Respondent was also licensed in North Carolina on or about July 27, 2017. That license expired on or about January 31, 2021.

7. There is no known history of disciplinary action on the Respondent's Tennessee and North Carolina licenses.

8. The Respondent was initially hired as an intern with a local college athletic association (the "College") located in Maryland from June 2014 to May of 2015. She was later hired by the College as an Assistant Athletic Trainer on or about June 1, 2022.

## **The Complaint**

9. On or about September 16, 2022, the Board received an Athletic Trainer Evaluation and Treatment Protocol Agreement Termination Notice (the “Termination Notice”), stating that the Active Supervisee-Evaluation and Treatment Protocol Agreement between the Respondent and her supervising physician was terminated due to “allegations by multiple witnesses of both consumption of alcohol and of being under the influence of alcohol while in a duty status involving the evaluation and treatment of student athletes and a failure to report a driving under the influence charge in July of 2022 to her immediate supervisor and her supervising physician.”

## **Board Investigation**

10. The Board initiated an investigation based on the Termination Notice. The Board notified the Respondent of its investigation by letter dated September 22, 2022 and directed her to provide a written response.

11. On October 10, 2022, the Respondent provided a written response stating:

I was charged with a DUI in July. I did not report it immediately because I was trying to figure out the severity of it with my lawyer and have not yet been to court for it. I was told by my boss that I had been smelling like alcohol and empty alcohol was found in my locker. I admitted that I had left it there and it was not consumed on work time.

12. On September 19, 2022, the Respondent underwent an evaluation and was diagnosed with a health condition.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For confidentiality purposes, the complete results and recommendations of the evaluation are not disclosed herein.

13. As a part of the investigation, Board staff interviewed the Respondent and several of her colleagues.

*Supervisor*<sup>3</sup>

14. On October 6, 2022, Board staff conducted an under-oath interview of the Director of Sports Medicine at the College (“Supervisor”) who directly supervised the Respondent. He was initially alerted to the Respondent’s concerning behaviors on or about August 12, 2022.

15. Several students and employees advised the Supervisor that the Respondent frequently smelled of alcohol and was heard opening cans while in the stalls in the locker room.

16. On September 9, 2022, the Supervisor was again alerted to some concerning behavior by the Respondent during a junior varsity game where she kept going up to the locker room when there was no reason to do so. Another employee had also sent the Supervisor a photo of the contents of the Respondent’s locker which included a brown paper Wawa bag full of empty alcoholic beverage containers.

17. On September 12, 2022, the Supervisor inspected the women’s locker room and found another separate plastic Wawa bag full of empty alcoholic beverage containers in the trash along with a receipt with the Respondent’s name on it. They were the same empty containers in the photo of the Respondent’s locker sent to the Supervisor on

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<sup>3</sup> To maintain confidentiality, the names of all witnesses, facilities, employees, and patients will not be used in this document but will be provided to the Respondent on request.



September 9, 2022. The Supervisor reported this information to human resources the following day.

18. On September 13, 2022, the Supervisor arrived at the College early that morning to find the Respondent walking out with the brown paper Wawa bag of empty containers which had previously been found in her locker. The Supervisor also noticed that the Respondent's car was inappropriately parked in the middle of two adjoining parking spaces. The Supervisor asked the Respondent if she was aware that she had parked in two spaces, and the Respondent advised that she was not aware. She proceeded to discard the bag of empty cans in the trash and then moved her car to an appropriate parking space.

19. The Supervisor later approached the Respondent regarding the multiple allegations of her concerning behavior and the empty cans found in her locker.

20. The Respondent admitted to drinking more due to anxiety at home. She also admitted to drinking the alcoholic beverages that were found in the brown paper bag in her locker. The Respondent denied drinking alcohol while at work.

21. The Respondent also disclosed that on July 11, 2022, she was arrested for driving under the influence/while intoxicated by alcohol and related offenses. The case has not yet been adjudicated.

22. The Respondent's behavior was also noted to be a concern when it began to affect her performance.

23. One employee reported that the Respondent had initially dressed her burn wound, however, when asked to redress the wound a few days later, the Respondent attempted to dress the wound inappropriately and had to be directed to do so correctly.

24. The Supervisor recalls asking the Respondent to apply a very basic sling with a velcro strap to a student's sprain, and she was unable to do so.

25. Based on the students and employees who reported an odor of alcohol on the Respondent, the empty cans of alcoholic beverages found in the Respondent's locker and in the trash, and the Respondent's overall erratic behavior, the Supervisor is concerned that the Respondent was consuming alcohol while working at the college.

#### ***Supervising Physician***

26. On October 7, 2022, Board staff conducted an under-oath interview of the physician who signed the Respondent's Athletic Trainer/Supervising Physician Evaluation and Treatment Protocol (the "Supervising Physician"). He was advised of the Respondent's behavior, and the Respondent's admissions to the Supervisor.

27. On September 16, 2022, the Supervising Physician, Supervisor, and a human resources representative met with the Respondent to advise her that her Evaluation and Treatment Protocol and her employment at the College would be terminated.

28. The Respondent apologized for putting the Supervising Physician in this position as she was working under his medical license.

29. The Supervising Physician also advised the Respondent that the lack of disclosure of her arrest in July was also a concern, especially coupled with the allegations being made that she consistently smelled of alcohol and was out of sorts at times.

30. The Supervising Physician does believe that the Respondent practiced as an athletic trainer while under the influence of alcohol. He also has concerns with the Respondent's ability to safely provide care as an athletic trainer.

### ***Seasonal Athletic Trainer***

31. On November 3, 2022, Board staff conducted an under-oath interview of the Seasonal Athletic Trainer (the "SAT") who worked with the Respondent daily.

32. The SAT described the Respondent's actions as erratic. The Respondent was known to avoid doing work, did not know what to do or what needed to be done, and was observed nodding off during a game.

33. The SAT stated that the Respondent's odd behaviors became progressively worse in the weeks leading up to her termination.

34. The SAT explained that the Respondent was constantly running into the training room while a game was in progress when there was no reason to do so. The Respondent was also known to use the bathroom stall often and take her bookbag with her. She was heard cracking open cans while in the stall.

35. The Respondent repeatedly had watery, bloodshot, glassy eyes, and regularly smelled of fresh alcohol.

36. The SAT explained that she had concerns about the Respondent's ability to provide safe athletic training services to athletes within the State of Maryland. The SAT



stated that there was an “overwhelming smell of alcohol on [the Respondent’s] breath and everyone in the facility could pick up on this pretty early on...and her behaviors, and the way she was acting as an athletic trainer didn’t seem ethically sound.”

### ***Interview of the Respondent***

37. On October 14, 2022, Board staff conducted an under-oath interview of the Respondent. In this interview, the Respondent stated:

I was told that I did the wrong thing about the DUI that I got in July and not reporting it. What was frustrating from that end was I was still trying to figure out legally if it was even something to bring up...I did personally start to drink more at home and I was told that I’ve been smelling like alcohol. No one told me...so I didn’t even know that that was a problem. I did drink on the [College] property[,] but it was not during work. And there was evidence found in my locker. My own fault for not taking care of that. But once again that wasn’t me trying to hide it, and it wasn’t me putting anyone’s life in jeopardy. I just made very terrible decisions and I’m completely admitting that.

38. The Respondent explained that she “had a lot of things happen within the past month personally that did contribute” to her drinking more at home.

39. The Respondent admitted to drinking on the property of the College on September 8, 2022. She had purchased a twelve pack of an alcoholic beverage the night before and it was in her car. She took the twelve pack out of her car and put it into her bookbag so that no one would see her with the alcohol. She then went into a remote area of the College and consumed most of the twelve pack alone.

40. After consuming the alcohol, the Respondent put the empty containers in the brown paper Wawa bag in her locker. She stated, “I wasn’t trying to hide it, but I put it in there because I felt like it was going to be easier to throw out in the long run.”



41. The Respondent stated, “I made a bad decision that day to put it there. I just thought it was convenient and I completely understand that that was just – it was wrong. It was completely wrong.”

42. The Respondent denies any knowledge about the other plastic Wawa bag found in the trash can outside the women’s locker room area full of the same empty alcoholic containers found in her locker, and with a receipt with her name on it.

43. Despite the numerous allegations, the Respondent denies drinking while on duty and working as an athletic trainer.

44. The Respondent admitted that she has a prior conviction from 2019 in North Carolina for Driving While Impaired which she had disclosed to human resources at the time she was hired by the College.

45. The Respondent failed to disclose her July 11, 2022 arrest for driving under the influence/while intoxicated by alcohol to her immediate Supervisor and/ or Supervising Physician.<sup>4</sup> She stated that she was “unsure about how to go about reporting it.”

46. When asked during the interview when she last consumed alcohol, the Respondent stated that she had some alcohol earlier that week, specifically Tuesday, October 11, 2022, because she “had some other personal issues going on” and she “chose to have a glass of wine.”

47. The Respondent stated that she does not believe she has a “true alcohol problem.”

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<sup>4</sup> For confidentiality purposes, the details of the arrest are not disclosed herein.

### CONCLUSION OF LAW

Based upon the foregoing Investigative Findings, Panel B of the Board concludes that the public health, safety, or welfare imperatively requires emergency action, and that pursuant to State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2) and COMAR 10.32.02.08B(7), the Respondent's license is summarily suspended.

### ORDER

**IT IS** thus, by Panel B of the Board, hereby:

**ORDERED** that pursuant to the authority vested in Panel B by State Gov't. §10-226(c)(2)(2021 Repl. Vol.) and COMAR 10.32.02.08B(7), the Respondent's license to practice as an athletic trainer in the State of Maryland is hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDED**; and it is further

**ORDERED** that, during the course of the summary suspension, the Respondent shall not practice as an athletic trainer in the State of Maryland; and it is further

**ORDERED** that in accordance with Md. Code Regs. 10.32.02.08B(7) and E, a post deprivation initial hearing on the summary suspension will be held on **Wednesday, December 21, 2022, at 11:00 a.m.** at the Board's offices, located at 4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21215-0095; and it is further

**ORDERED** that after the **SUMMARY SUSPENSION** hearing before Panel B, if the Respondent is dissatisfied with the result of the hearing, may request, within ten (10) days, an evidentiary hearing, such hearing to be set within thirty (30) days of the request,

before an Administrative Law Judge at the Office of Administrative Hearings, Administrative Law Building, 11101 Gilroy Road, Hunt Valley, Maryland 21031-1301; and it is further

**ORDERED** that a copy of the Order for Summary Suspension shall be filed by Panel B immediately in accordance with Health Occ. § 14-407(a)(2021 Repl. Vol.); and it is further

**ORDERED** that this is a disciplinary Order of Panel B, and as such, is a public document. *See* Health Occ. §§ 1-607, 14-411.1(b)(2) and Md. Code Ann., Gen Prov. §4-333(B)(6).

12/07/2022  
Date

***Signature on File***

Christine A. Farrelly, Executive Director  
Maryland State Board of Physicians