

<b>IN THE MATTER OF</b>	*	<b>BEFORE THE</b>
<b>ARIFA RABIA SATTAR, P.A.-C</b>	*	<b>MARYLAND STATE</b>
<b>Respondent</b>	*	<b>BOARD OF PHYSICIANS</b>
<b>License Number: C04635</b>	*	<b>Case Number: 2219-0210B</b>
* * * * *	*	* * * * *

**CONSENT ORDER**

On March 26, 2020, Disciplinary Panel B (“Panel B”) of the Maryland State Board of Physicians (the “Board”) charged Arifa Rabia Sattar, P.A.-C (the “Respondent”) with violating the Maryland Physician Assistants Act (the "Act"), Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. §§ 15-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol. & 2019 Supp.)

Specifically, the Respondent was charged with violating the following:

**§ 15-314. Reprimand, probation, suspension, revocation.**

(a) *In general.* – Subject to the hearing provisions of § 15-315 of this subtitle, a disciplinary panel, on the affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum of the disciplinary panel, may reprimand any physician assistant, place any physician assistant on probation, or suspend or revoke a license if the physician assistant:

- ...
  - (3) Is guilty of:
    - (ii) Unprofessional conduct in the practice of medicine; [and]
  - ...
    - (11) Willfully makes or files a false report or record in the practice of medicine[.]

On June 24, 2020, Panel B was convened as a Disciplinary Committee for Case Resolution (“DCCR”) in this matter. Based on negotiations occurring as a result of this DCCR, the Respondent agreed to enter into this Consent Order, consisting of Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Order, and Consent.

## FINDINGS OF FACT

Panel B finds the following:

### I. BACKGROUND

1. At all times relevant, the Respondent was and is licensed to practice as a Physician Assistant in the State of Maryland. The Respondent was originally licensed by the Board on October 26, 2011 under license number C04635. The Respondent's license is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2021.
2. The Respondent was employed as Surgical Physician Assistant at a hospital in the State of Maryland (the "Hospital")<sup>1</sup> from approximately 2011, through May 2, 2019, when the Hospital terminated the Respondent's employment.
3. The Respondent is presently employed at another hospital in the State of Maryland.
4. On or about May 16, 2019, the Board received a Mandated 10-day Report<sup>2</sup> (the "Report") from the Hospital. The Report stated that the Hospital terminated the Respondent's employment due to her submission for reimbursement of travel expenses for attending a continuing medical education ("CME") conference in the State of Florida when, in fact, there was no such CME conference that she attended. The CME institution

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<sup>1</sup> To ensure confidentiality and privacy, the names of individuals and entities involved in this case, other than the Respondent, are not disclosed in this document.

<sup>2</sup> Health Occ. §§15-103(c) and (g) require that a within 10 days of the action a hospital must report to the Board any limitation, reduction, or other change of the terms of employment of the physician assistant or any termination of employment of the physician assistant for any reason that might be grounds for disciplinary action under Health Occ. §15-314.

referenced by the Respondent does not provide live conferences but only an online self-study CME program that does not require travel. The Respondent submitted documentation for reimbursement for a stay at a hotel in Orlando, Florida, and did not attend a live conference at or near this location. The Report concluded that the Respondent had presented falsified expense documents for reimbursement and based on this “egregious dishonesty,” the Hospital terminated her employment.

5. Following receipt of this report, the Board opened an investigation.

## **II. BOARD INVESTIGATION**

6. On or about May 29, 2019, Board staff subpoenaed the Respondent’s personnel file from the Hospital. In addition, the Board requested the Respondent’s travel and expense documents along with the Hospital’s Code of Conduct and relevant policies regarding CME credits. These materials were subsequently received by the Board. A review of these materials revealed that the Respondent submitted expenses for reimbursement including roundtrip airfare to Florida and two nights of hotel accommodations.
7. On or about September 11, 2019, Board staff sent an initial contact letter to the Respondent requesting a written response.
8. On September 20, 2019, the Board received the Respondent’s written response. In her response, the Respondent stated she enrolled for an on-the-go CME seminar that can be taken anywhere so she chose to take it in Miami

and Orlando, Florida. The Respondent stated that she took the seminar between April 14 and April 18, 2019. She stated that she chose this CME course because it satisfied her CME credits and allowed her to travel, and she was not aware that the Hospital did not allow for travel in this circumstance.

9. On October 8, 2019, Board staff interviewed the Respondent under oath. During her interview the Respondent confirmed to Board staff that she worked at the Hospital from approximately January 2012 through May 2, 2019 as a physician assistant. She stated that she completed CME travel lectures while away in Miami and submitted the expenses to the Hospital for reimbursement. The Respondent stated that the CME lectures had been previously recorded such that she was able to listen to them on her laptop computer and did so while staying in Miami and at a hotel in Orlando. Upon being asked why she chose to travel to Florida to take this CME course that was downloadable and thus could be completed anywhere the Respondent stated, "my understanding was because it's a travel seminar, I could take it anywhere." Board staff asked the Respondent if she felt that this would have been an inappropriate use of hospital expenses. The Respondent answered, "in retrospect, yes, but at the time I didn't think about it."

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, Disciplinary Panel B of the Board concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent is guilty of unprofessional conduct in the practice of medicine, in violation of Health Occ. § 15-314(a)(3)(ii); and willfully made or

filed a false report or record in the practice of medicine, in violation of Health Occ. § 15-314(a)(11).

### **ORDER**

It is, thus, on the affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum of Board Disciplinary Panel B, hereby

**ORDERED** that the Respondent is **REPRIMANDED**; and it is further

**ORDERED** that the Respondent is placed on **PROBATION** for a minimum of **ONE YEAR**.<sup>3</sup> During probation, the Respondent shall comply with the following terms and conditions of probation:

Within **SIX MONTHS**, the Respondent is required to take and successfully complete a course in **ethics**. The following terms apply:

- (a) it is the Respondent's responsibility to locate, enroll in and obtain the disciplinary panel's approval of the course before the course begins;
- (b) the Respondent must provide documentation to the disciplinary panel that the Respondent has successfully completed the course;
- (c) the course may not be used to fulfill the continuing medical education credits required for license renewal; and
- (d) the Respondent is responsible for the cost of the course; and it is further

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

**ORDERED** that the effective date of the Consent Order is the date the Consent Order is signed by the Executive Director of the Board or her designee. The Executive

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<sup>3</sup> If the Respondent's license expires during the period of probation, the probation and any conditions will be tolled.

Director or her designee signs the Consent Order on behalf of the disciplinary panel which has imposed the terms and conditions of this Consent Order; and it is further

**ORDERED** that, after the minimum period of probation imposed by the Consent Order has passed and the Respondent has been compliant with the terms and conditions of this Consent Order, the Respondent may submit a written petition for termination of probation. After consideration of the petition, the Respondent's probation may be administratively terminated through an order of the disciplinary panel if the Respondent has complied with all probationary terms and conditions and there are no pending complaints related to the charges; and it is further

**ORDERED** that the Respondent is responsible for all costs incurred in fulfilling the terms and conditions of this Consent Order; and it is further

**ORDERED** that, if the Respondent allegedly fails to comply with any term or condition imposed by this Consent Order, the Respondent shall be given notice and an opportunity for a hearing. If the disciplinary panel determines 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 followed by an exceptions process before a disciplinary panel; and if the disciplinary panel determines there is no genuine dispute as to a material fact, the Respondent 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 the Respondent has failed to comply with any term or condition imposed by this Consent Order, the disciplinary panel may reprimand the Respondent, place the

Respondent on probation with appropriate terms and conditions, or suspend with appropriate terms and conditions, or revoke the Respondent'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 on the Respondent; and it is further

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

07/21/2020  
Date

## *Signature on File*

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

### CONSENT

I, Arifa Rabia Sattar, P.A.-C., acknowledge that I have consulted with counsel before signing this document.

By this Consent, I agree to be bound by this Consent Order and all its terms and conditions and understand that the disciplinary panel will not entertain any request for amendments or modifications to any condition.

I assert that I am aware of my right to a formal evidentiary hearing, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 15-315 and Md. Code Ann., State Gov't §§ 10-201 *et seq.* concerning the pending charges. I waive this right and have elected to sign this Consent Order instead.

I acknowledge the validity and enforceability of this Consent Order as if entered after the conclusion of a formal evidentiary hearing in which I would have had the right to counsel, to confront witnesses, to give testimony, to call witnesses on my behalf, and to all other substantive and procedural protections as provided by law. I waive those procedural and substantive protections. I acknowledge the legal authority and the jurisdiction of the disciplinary panel to initiate these proceedings and to issue and enforce this Consent Order. I voluntarily enter into and agree to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Consent Order as a resolution of the charges. I waive any right to contest the Findings of

Fact and Conclusions of Law and Order set out in the Consent Order. I waive all rights to appeal this Consent Order.

I sign this Consent Order, without reservation, and fully understand the language and meaning of its terms.

## *Signature on File*

7/10/20  
Date

Arifa Rabia Sattar, P.A.-C.

### NOTARY

STATE OF: MARYLAND

CITY/COUNTY OF: HOWARD

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2020, before me, a Notary Public of the State and City/County aforesaid, personally appeared Arifa Rabia Sattar, P.A.-C, and made oath in due form of law that the foregoing Consent Order was her voluntary act and deed.

AS WITNESS, my hand and Notary Seal.



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Notary Public

My commission expires: 01/17/2022