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| IN THE MATTER OF | * | BEFORE THE |
| JULIO RAMIREZ, M.D. | * | MARYLAND STATE BOARD |
| Respondent | * | OF PHYSICIANS |
| LICENSE NUMBER: D53645 | * | CASE NUMBER: 2224-0040A |

* * * * *

**ORDER FOR SUMMARY SUSPENSION OF LICENSE
TO PRACTICE MEDICINE**

Disciplinary Panel A (“Panel A”) of the Maryland State Board of Physicians (the “Board”) hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDS** the license of **JULIO RAMIREZ, M.D.** (the “Respondent”), license number D53645, to practice medicine in the State of Maryland.

Panel A takes such action pursuant to its authority under Md. Code Ann., State Gov’t § 10-226(c)(2) (2021 Repl. Vol. & 2023 Supp.), concluding that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action.

INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

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

I. Background

1. At all times relevant hereto, Respondent was, and is, licensed to practice medicine in Maryland. The Respondent was originally licensed to practice medicine in 1998 under license number D53645. His license is active through September 30, 2025.

¹ The statements about the Respondent’s conduct set forth in this document are intended to provide the Respondent with reasonable notice of the basis for this suspension. 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 action.

2. The Respondent was board-certified in General Pediatrics. His certification expired in or around January 2022.

3. The Respondent has been the sole owner and practitioner of a medical practice located in Chestertown, Maryland since 1999. The Respondent previously had a second office location in Queenstown, Maryland from on or about 2016 until on or about 2020.

II. Complaint

4. On or about September 29, 2023, the Board received a complaint (“Complaint”) from the parent of a patient of the Respondent (“Complainant”) alleging that the Respondent had “sexually assaulted” her during her child’s appointment with the Respondent on September 28, 2023. Specifically, the Complainant stated that the Respondent entered the exam room and “shook [her] hand, placed his left hand on [her] shoulder, and leaned in for a hug.” He then groped her left breast with one hand and her vaginal area with his other hand. The Respondent moved his hand to the Complainant’s buttocks after she removed his hand from her vaginal area.

III. Investigation of Complaint

5. The Board initiated an investigation of the Respondent upon receipt of the Complaint. As part of the investigation, the Board, *inter alia*, conducted multiple interviews with the Complainant, the Respondent, and current and former employees of the Respondent.

Interview with Complainant

6. On or about October 27, 2023, the Board conducted an interview with the Complainant who stated the following:

- a. On September 28, 2023, the Complainant took her child to see the Respondent due to her child having an infected toenail.

- b. The Respondent came into the room and touched the Complainant's shoulder "which he always does." The Complainant stated she always felt "super uncomfortable but nothing to where [she] felt like it needed to be reported. It was just kind of like that weird feeling."
- c. The Respondent positioned himself in between the Complainant's legs and "with his right hand he started to grope [her] left breast. Then he put his left hand and like fully palmed [her] vagina. And the only other way I can explain it is he started to rub it with his thumb."
- d. The Respondent "had positioned himself so close to [her] between [her] legs that when he was fondling [her] with his left hand, [her child], even though [her child] was right next to [her], couldn't see it."
- e. While the Respondent briefly examined her child's foot, "he moved his left hand up and positioned it under [the Complainant's] butt where [she] was partially sitting on it."
- f. The Respondent left the exam room after "mention[ing] something about an antibiotic for [the Complainant's child]." The Complainant composed herself in the office after becoming emotional and crying. She then left the exam room and reported the incident to a current member of the Respondent's staff ("Employee 1").
- g. The Complainant spoke with Employee 1 in another exam room. After the Complainant informed Employee 1 about the incident, Employee 1 told the Complainant to "wait there" in the exam room. The

Complainant walked out after Employee 1 left the room and she “drove directly to the police station” where she reported the incident.

Respondent’s Written Response to the Complaint

7. In his written response to the allegations, the Respondent, among other things, stated that he had no idea why the Complainant complained about their interaction at her daughter’s visit and that he was “quiet [*sic*] surprised and confused by her allegations.”

Employee Interviews Regarding Sexual Misconduct/Inappropriate Touching

8. On or about February 13, 2024, the Board conducted an interview with a former employee of the Respondent (“Employee 2”) who stated the following:

- a. Employee 2 worked for the Respondent for approximately one year beginning in or around 2015. Employee 2 reached out to the Respondent’s office in or around July 2022 for an employment opportunity. Employee 2 was invited for an in-person interview shortly thereafter.
- b. During the re-hire interview in 2022, the Respondent began talking about his personal life and his marital status. The Respondent also mentioned that he had a new car and asked her if she wanted to take a ride. Employee 2 agreed, thinking that the ride would be around the business park where the office was located. When Employee 2 noticed they were leaving Chestertown, she asked him where they were going and the Respondent stated he was “going to show [her] where he lived.” Employee 2 told him no and that she did not have much time but the Respondent said “it’s going to be really quick, really quick.”

- c. The Respondent gave Employee 2 a tour of his home. At the end of the tour while standing near the Respondent's garage, the Respondent "put himself against, like my back area, so my butt, I guess. And then I was shocked, and I was like, what are you doing? He was like, oh, oh. I thought we were going to – I'm like no. I didn't even agree to come to your house." When the Respondent "pushed his body against [Employee 2], he "lifted my dress up and grabbed my butt. And I just was taken really surprised, and I jumped up." The Respondent drove them back to the office shortly thereafter.
- d. After Employee 2 started working for the Respondent in 2022, Employee 2 would go to the Respondent's office to talk with him about a patient. The Respondent would tell her to come inside, sit down, and the Respondent would close the door "every single time." The Respondent tried to kiss her "one or two times" when she went to his office to speak with him about a patient. The Respondent would also rub his arm on her leg in his office. Employee 2 stated, "If he wasn't trying to kiss me, he would try to do that."
- e. Employee 3 told Employee 2 that the Respondent had also tried kissing her.
- f. Employee 2 worked for the Respondent for approximately one month in 2022. After she left this employment, the Respondent would

communicate with her on WhatsApp.² When Employee 2 would post pictures of herself on WhatsApp, the Respondent would “comment with, like, emojis, like, with those heart emojis and everything like that.”

9. On or about March 18, 2024, the Board conducted an interview with a former employee of the Respondent (“Employee 3”) who stated the following:

- a. Employee 3 was a patient of the Respondent as a child. Employee 3’s child was also a patient of the Respondent.
- b. Employee 3 was employed by the Respondent in or around October 2021 for approximately three months at the Chestertown office.
- c. While in the Respondent’s office to discuss patient care, the Respondent “would go to answer me, and like, just start smiling and, like, whispering in my ear. And he would grab my butt.” The Respondent would “like, whisper in my ear, like he was trying to hug me or, like, almost kiss me or something. And I would just hurry up and leave.” Employee 3 realized that the Respondent touching her was not an accident when it happened two more times.
- d. After the first time that this happened, Employee 3 mentioned it to Employee 2 who said “He did it to me as well.” Employee 2 said that while she was at the Respondent’s house, she “had a dress on or

² WhatsApp is a social messaging application that allows users to make video and voice calls, and send images, audio, video, etc.

something, and he put his – put his hand up her dress, made her feel uncomfortable and she left.”

- e. The Respondent would also hug Employee 3 and get close to her. “[W]hen he would grab my butt, like, he would stand, like, in front of me, and we would be, like, face to face, like we were having a conversation. And then he would get closer to me, and then take one hand around my body and grab, like, my butt.” Sometimes when Employee 3 was standing next to the Respondent, he would also put his arm “over my shoulder and kind of like hug me that way, or you know, pull me closer to him that way, if that makes sense.”
- f. The first time that the Respondent touched Employee 3, she “was just like, what the f---? And I walked out.” When it happened a second time, “I put, like, my fingers like, in his chest, like, you know, to like back him up, you know.”

10. On or about February 13, 2024, the Board conducted an interview with a former employee of the Respondent (“Employee 4”) who stated the following:

- a. Employee 4 was employed by the Respondent from approximately July 2016 through June 2019. Employee 4 worked at both the Chestertown and Queenstown office locations.
- b. Employee 4 “had a few times that I felt a little bit uncomfortable by [the Respondent’s] gestures.” These gestures involved the Respondent hugging her in his office. Employee 4 “... asked the other staff if, like, [the Respondent], does he do that to you guys as well? If they say yes,

then like I said, oh, then it must be really just cultural stuff. But they said no. So that's when I felt uncomfortable, and I told them.”

- c. Employee 4 told the Respondent that she was not comfortable with him giving her hugs. When she told him “... he was not happy. To me, he seemed a little bit offended because probably he didn't – it was impromptu, and maybe it was just casual for him.”

11. On or about March 22, 2024, the Board conducted an interview with a former employee of the Respondent (“Employee 5”) who stated the following:

- a. Employee 5 was employed by the Respondent from on or around March 2021 through January 2022 at the Chestertown office location.
- b. Employee 5 worked with Employee 3 and would usually leave a few minutes before Employee 3. One day when Employee 5 was about to leave, Employee 3 asked Employee 5 to wait for her. Employee 3 asked Employee 5 to wait for her on multiple other occasions because she did not “want to be left [there] alone with [the Respondent].” Employee 5 questioned Employee 3 about the situation and Employee 3 said “...I don't want it going around, but she did mention that [the Respondent] had touched her bottom.” Employee 3 did not know if it was an accident but “... she was just caught off guard that she didn't even know what to think of that circumstance.”
- c. Employee 3 asked Employee 5 if the Respondent had ever touched her. Employee 5 asked Employee 3 why she had asked that question and Employee 3 “... said that he had touched her bottom again.”

Employee 3 told her "... I didn't know how to react. She was like, I just felt so mad. She was like, I feel so violated."

- d. Employee 2 told Employee 5 that the Respondent took Employee 2 to his house after her interview. The Respondent said he wanted to show Employee 2 his car and while they were looking at his car, the Respondent told Employee 2 to sit in the car. Employee 2 sat in the car and the Respondent ended up driving to his house. Employee 2 also told Employee 5 that the Respondent "... lifted up [Employee 2's] dress and said, can I, and he was going to put his hand up there. And she said she immediately said no and that she – they left."

Interview with Respondent

12. On or about March 28, 2024, the Board conducted an interview with the Respondent who stated, among other things, the following:

- a. The Respondent admitted that a hug occurred between him and the Complainant but stated that the Complainant initiated the contact.
- b. The Respondent admitted that he drove Employee 2 to his house in his car and that he showed her around his home. The Respondent stated that he did not see a problem with driving Employee 2 to his home at that time but he now sees how it could be a professional boundary issue.
- c. After being confronted with screenshots of WhatsApp communications with Employee 2, the Respondent admitted that he acknowledged the photos of Employee 2 on WhatsApp when he "put

those expressions but that's it.”

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Investigative Findings, Panel A concludes that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively require emergency action in this case, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2) (2021 Repl. Vol. & 2023 Supp.) and COMAR 10.32.02.08B(7).

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Investigative Findings and Conclusion of Law, it is, by a majority of a quorum of Panel A, hereby:

ORDERED that pursuant to the authority vested in Panel A by Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2) and COMAR 10.32.02.08B(7), the license of **JULIO RAMIREZ, M.D.**, License Number D53645, to practice medicine in the State of Maryland is **SUMMARILY SUSPENDED**; and it is further

ORDERED that, during the summary suspension, the Respondent shall not practice medicine in the State of Maryland; and it is further

ORDERED that in accordance with COMAR 10.32.02.08B(7) and E a post-deprivation hearing on the summary suspension will be held on **Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at 10:30 a.m.** at the Board's offices, located at 4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21215; and it is further

ORDERED that at the conclusion of the **SUMMARY SUSPENSION** post-deprivation hearing before Panel A, the Respondent, if dissatisfied with the result of the hearing, may request within ten (10) days an evidentiary hearing, such hearing to be held 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; and it is further

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

ORDERED that this is an Order of Panel A, 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).

4/30/2024
Date

Signature On File

Ellen Douglas Smith
Deputy Director
Maryland State Board of Physicians