

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent was and is licensed to practice medicine in the State of Maryland². The Respondent was originally licensed to practice medicine in Maryland on October 18, 2016, under License Number D0082519. The Respondent's license is current through September 30, 2025.

2. The Respondent is board-certified in emergency medicine.

THE COMPLAINT

3. On or about August 15, 2024, the Board received a letter known as a Mandated 10-Day Report³ (the "Report") from the Respondent's former employer ("Employer") a Medical Practice Group in Maryland, stating that "[Employer] believes that Dr. Ratliff is currently unable to safely practice medicine. His employment with [Employer] was involuntarily terminated on July 25, 2024."

BOARD INVESTIGATION

4. On receipt of the Complaint, the Board initiated an investigation into the allegation. As part of its investigation, Board staff conducted interviews and subpoenaed records including the Respondent's employment files, Respondent's medical records, and medical records of patients.

² The Respondent is also licensed in the District of Columbia. His medical licenses in California and Virginia are currently expired.

³ The Maryland Code Annotated, Health Occupations Article ("Health Occ.") §§14-413(a)(2)(i) and 14-414(a)(2)(i) require that within 10 days of an action hospitals, related institutions, and alternative health systems ("facilities") report any action taken against a licensed physician which denies, restricts, limits, changes, removes, terminates, suspends, or places any conditions or restrictions on the privileges and/or salaried or contractual employment of the physician for reasons that might be grounds for disciplinary action under provisions of Health Occ. §14-404.

5. The Board's investigation revealed that the Respondent had missed work and that he had been suffering from alcohol dependency, which led to multiple hospitalizations starting in 2021.

6. On or about December 12, 2023, the Respondent was assigned to work the Emergency Care Management (ECM) shift. His responsibilities included consulting with nurses and physicians regarding patient care and making decisions regarding the transfer of patients to appropriate facilities. During the shift, the Respondent was sent medical information and patient charts for review. However, his notes were incomplete, unclear and failed to address the questions posed to him and contained grammatical errors. The Respondent's notes lacked essential clinical information, including patient history, vital signs, and documentation of consults with the emergency room physicians, raising concern regarding the Respondent's ability to safely practice medicine.

7. On or about December 14, 2023, the Respondent was scheduled to work the ECM schedule from 6 am to 4 pm. Around noon the Respondent abandoned his shift, ceased responding to calls, and staff were unable to reach him. The Respondent failed to notify anyone that he left his shift resulting in delays of patient treatment.

8. The Respondent was eventually contacted in the evening by his Chief Supervisor ("Physician A") and told his supervisor that he left because his dog was sick. Physician A described the Respondent's behavior as incoherent, rambling, and repetitive, suggesting that the Respondent appeared to be under the influence. A welfare check was conducted by a co-worker physician ("Physician B"), who observed multiple empty wine bottles at the Respondent's residence and disposed of them.

9. On or about December 16, 2023, the Respondent was admitted to a local hospital for acute medical conditions. Per the local police authority, the Respondent's apartment was disheveled with multiple empty liquor bottles and unsanitary conditions.

10. The Medical Group therefore removed the Respondent from the work schedule and instructed him to seek treatment for his condition. After he was removed from the work schedule, the Respondent contacted his direct report supervisor ("Physician C") via text and phone calls during which he exhibited signs of intoxication, including slurred speech, disorganized thinking and repetition.

11. In April 2024, as a condition for the Respondent's return to work, the Medical Group referred him to a program (the "Program") for an independent evaluation to assess his fitness to practice medicine safely. On or about May 23, 2024, the clinical team at the Program concluded that the Respondent, "is not currently safe to practice and he needs sustained, intensive . . . treatment" to address his condition.

12. In July 2024, Physician A reported that she had received calls from the Respondent in the middle of the night and that he appeared intoxicated during the conversations.

13. The Respondent failed to comply with the conditions for his return to work and he was terminated on July 25, 2024.

14. In a letter dated September 4, 2024, Board staff requested that the Respondent provide a response to the assertion in the Report that he was involuntarily terminated due to concern regarding his ability to practice medicine safely.

15. The Respondent, through legal counsel, submitted a response to the Board dated September 11, 2024, in which he acknowledged his alcohol dependence and stated that he was undergoing treatment for his condition.

16. On or about October 1, 2024, the Respondent was interviewed by the Board. During the interview, he acknowledged suffering from alcoholism and another medical condition, admitted to consuming large amounts of alcohol, and stated that he had sought treatment for his condition. He also acknowledged that that he abandoned his December 14, 2023, shift without notifying anyone that he was leaving.

17. On or about August 22, 2023, the Respondent completed his 2023 license renewal application (the "Application") and electronically submitted it to the Board. Part 2 of the Application contains a section titled "Character and Fitness Questions," requiring the Respondent to answer "YES" or "NO" to a series of questions for the period since July 21, 2021. The Respondent answered "NO" to Question 10, which states "Do you currently have any condition or impairment (including but not limited to, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, or a physical, mental, emotional, or nervous disorder or condition) that in any way affects your ability to practice your profession in a safe, competent, ethical and professional manner?"

18. At the conclusion of the application, the Respondent certified that he personally reviewed all responses to the items in the application and that the information he provided was true and accurate to the best of his knowledge.

19. Five days after completing the Application, on or about August 27, 2023, the Respondent was evaluated at a medical facility for a medical condition where he reported that he has been drinking heavily for the past week, drinking a few bottles of wine per day.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Investigative Findings, Panel A concludes that the public health, safety, or welfare imperatively requires 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

It is, by a majority of a quorum of Panel A, hereby:

ORDERED that pursuant to the authority vested in the Board by Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2) and COMAR 10.32.02.08B(7), the license of the Respondent, Jonathan M. Ratliff, M.D., License Number D0082519, to practice medicine in the State of Maryland is **SUMMARILY SUSPENDED**; and it is further

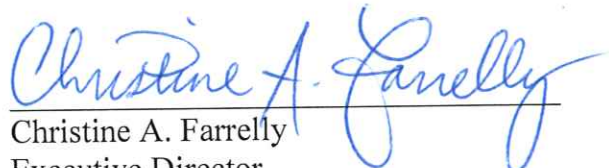
ORDERED that a post-deprivation hearing in accordance with COMAR 10.32.02.08B(7) and E has been scheduled for **Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at 10:30 a.m.** before Disciplinary Panel A at the Maryland State Board of Physicians, 4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21215; and it is further

ORDERED that at the conclusion of the post-deprivation summary suspension hearing held 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 this Order for Summary Suspension 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).

11/22/2024
Date


Christine A. Farrelly
Executive Director
Maryland State Board of Physicians