

IN THE MATTER OF
PATRICIA C. ONUOHA

Respondent

Unlicensed

*** BEFORE THE**
*** MARYLAND STATE**
*** BOARD OF PHYSICIANS**
*** Case Number: 2219-0040B**

* * * * *

CONSENT ORDER

On October 1, 2019, Disciplinary Panel B (“Panel B”) of the Maryland State Board of Physicians (the “Board”) charged **PATRICIA C. ONUOHA** (the “Respondent”), under the Maryland Medical Practice Act (the “Act”), Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. (“Health Occ.”) §§ 14-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. Vol. & 2018 Supp.). Panel B charged the Respondent under the following provisions of the Act:

Health Occ. § 14-601. Practicing without license.

Except as otherwise provided in this title, a person may not practice, attempt to practice, or offer to practice medicine in this State unless licensed by the Board.

Health Occ. § 14-602. Misrepresentation as practitioner of medicine.

(a) *In general.*- Unless authorized to practice medicine under this title, a person may not represent to the public, by description of services, methods, procedures, or otherwise, that the person is authorized to practice medicine in this State.

(b) Certain representations prohibited. – Except as otherwise provided in this article, a person may not use the words or terms “Dr.,” “doctor,” “physician,” “D.O.,” or “M.D.” with the intent to represent that the person practices medicine, unless the person is:

(1) Licensed to practice medicine under this title[.]

Health Occ. § 14-606. Penalties.

(a) Imposition of Penalties. –

...

(4) Except as provided in paragraph (5) of this subsection, a person violates § 14-601 or § 14-602 of this subtitle is:

...

(ii) Subject to a civil fine of not more than \$50,000 to be levied by a disciplinary panel.

Health Occ. § 14-101. Definitions.

(o) *Practice medicine* - (1) "Practice medicine" means to engage, with or without compensation, in medical:

- (i) Diagnosis;
- (ii) Healing;
- (iii) Treatment; or
- (iv) Surgery.

(2) "Practice medicine" includes doing, undertaking, professing to do, and attempting any of the following:

- (i) Diagnosing, healing, treating, preventing, prescribing for, or removing any physical, mental, or emotional ailment or supposed ailment of an individual:
 - 1. By physical, mental, emotional, or other process that is exercised or invoked by the practitioner, the patient, or both; or
 - 2. By appliance, test, drug, operation, or treatment[.]

On November 20, 2019, Panel B was convened as a Disciplinary Committee for Case Resolution ("DCCR") in this matter. As a result of negotiations occurring as a result of the DCCR, the Respondent agreed to enter into this Consent Order, consisting of Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Panel B finds:

I. BACKGROUND

1. At all times relevant to these charges, the Respondent was not and is not a physician licensed to practice medicine in the State of Maryland. The Respondent has never been licensed as a physician in Maryland.

2. On June 16, 2018, the Maryland State Board of Nursing issued the Respondent a certified nursing assistant (“CNA”) certification under Certification Number A00174876. The Respondent’s CNA certification remains active until December 28, 2020.

3. At all times relevant to these charges, the Respondent maintained an office (the “Office”) at 6492 Landover Road, Cheverly, Maryland 20785.

II. THE COMPLAINT

4. The Board initiated an investigation of the Respondent after receiving a complaint, dated September 12, 2018, from an individual (the “Complainant”)¹ who alleged that the Respondent is a “fake physician” who is practicing at an office in Cheverly, Maryland. The Complainant stated that the Respondent claims to have a medical degree and a PhD from a “scam school,” the British West Indies College of Medicine. The Complainant reported that the Respondent has an online biography on the website *painmanagementdirectory.com* and stated that “depending on who she is scamming, she is either a physician, a psychoanalyst, a research scientist . . . a pain specialist [or] a malaria expert”

III. BOARD INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

5. The Board’s investigation determined that the Respondent: attempted or offered to practice medicine in Maryland without a Board license, in violation of Health Occ. § 14-601; represented herself to the public, by description of services, methods, procedures, or otherwise,

¹ For confidentiality reasons, identifying names will be disclosed in this document.

that she was authorized to practice medicine in Maryland, without authorization, in violation of § 14-602(a); and used the terms “Dr.,” “doctor”, and/or “M.D.” with the intent to practice medicine, without being licensed under the Act, in violation of Health Occ. § 14-602(b)(1).

6. The Board’s investigation involved a review of a variety of materials, including the website the Complainant referenced in his complaint, other internet-related materials, an interview of the Respondent, and a review of documentary materials, including a State laboratory application the Respondent submitted in September 2018. The Board also conducted a site review of the Respondent’s Office.

Internet postings

7. The Respondent posted on the websites *pain treatment directory.com* and *LinkedIn*. The Respondent identified herself on *pain management directory.com* as “Dr. Patricia C. Onuoha, PhD, MD, DIP, BCCS, BCC.” The Respondent described herself as a “cognitive specialist” who performs biofeedback, electrical stimulation therapies, “mind body medicine,” neurofeedback, nutritional medicine, psychotherapy and substance abuse treatment. The Respondent identified her location as being in “Cheverly, Maryland 20785.” The Respondent states on the website, “I am Dr. Patricia Chinwe Onuoha, a seasoned Medical Practitioner . . . My purpose is to apply my wide knowledge in making diagnosis and treating the findings through various approach (sic)” On the website under “Testimonials,” the Respondent writes, “Applying strong skill of diagnosis, assessment and then management of clients of P & A Clinic makes the difference. Clients reported that their sleep has improved, neuronal pain, fibromyalgia (sic) migraine and pounding headache reduced drastically” and that “diabetes, arthritis and rheumatism has (sic) been well managed through P & A nutritional approach and guidance, detoxification and education with wellness coaching among others.” The Respondent listed her *LinkedIn* profile on this website.

8. The Respondent's *LinkedIn* profile states that the Respondent has a medical degree and diploma in international medicine from the University of Science Arts and Technology, College of Medicine Montserrat British West Indies (years attended, 2013-2016). The Respondent states on her profile that she is a "seasoned Medical Professional with PhD in Public Health, an MD Degree, Diploma in International Medicine and a Board Certified Cognitive Specialist and Cognitive Coach." On the profile under "Experience," the Respondent states that since June 2017, she has been working in a "Health Clinic" in Landover, Maryland, where she is involved in "General Health Assessment and Management."

Respondent's laboratory application

9. In September 2018, the Respondent applied to the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("MDH"),² Office of Health Care Quality—Laboratory Licensing Programs, for a laboratory license.

10. The Board contacted an MDH administrator who was in the process of reviewing the Respondent's laboratory application. The administrator stated that MDH had not approved the Respondent's application due to its inability to verify the Respondent's academic degrees. The administrator stated that the Respondent "has emailed [him] every week" and during those contacts, identified herself as a physician.

11. The Respondent identified herself in the laboratory application as "Dr. Patricia C. Onuoha," and as laboratory director, with an address of 6492 Landover Road, Cheverly, Maryland 20785. The Respondent listed the laboratory practice as "P & A Health Assessment and Management LLC."

² The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has since been renamed the Maryland Department of Health.

12. The Respondent also submitted a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (“CLIA”) Application for Certification form, dated September 11, 2018, in conjunction with her laboratory application. In it, the Respondent listed her credentials as “PhD, MD.” The Respondent stated that her laboratory intended to perform testing including “dip stick urinalysis, gluometer (sic), toxicology, chemistry/cholesterol check, endocrinology.” The Respondent stated that her laboratory is for a “community clinic.”

13. The MDH reportedly denied the Respondent’s laboratory application in or around December 2018.

Site visit, January 28, 2019

14. Board staff made an unannounced site visit to the Respondent’s Cheverly, Maryland Office on January 28, 2019. Board staff observed that the Office contained two examination tables, a stethoscope, a medical dictionary and a DUI (driving while under the influence) test kit with a bottle of liquor.

Respondent’s written response to the complaint

15. In a letter dated January 28, 2019, the Board informed the Respondent that it had initiated an investigation of her based on allegations that she was practicing medicine in Maryland without a license. The Board also issued the Respondent a series of subpoenas, one of which was for copies of any academic degrees or professional credentials she earned.

16. The Respondent responded by letter dated January 31, 2019. The Respondent stated that she rented an office at 6492 Landover Road, Suite D2, Cheverly, Maryland “with the goal of operating a pre-employment drug testing & DUI Education center or a point of care referral center” The Respondent stated that she registered a limited liability corporation by the name of “P

& A Health Assessment & Management” for this purpose. The Respondent denied hiring anyone or advertising the facility as open for operations.

17. With respect to her credentials, the Respondent claimed that she was graduated from a “recognized medical college,” was eligible to take the “forthcoming US medical board exam (USMLE),” but was not licensed to practice medicine in Maryland or any other jurisdiction. The Respondent stated, “I have not in any form or shape operated any clinic nor paraded myself as a licensed physician in the state (sic) of Maryland or anywhere else.”

18. The Respondent provided a series of documents/certificates, which included a transcript, purportedly from the University of Science, Arts & Technology, Montserrat. The transcript is variously marked as either being an “official transcript” and an “unofficial transcript.” The Respondent also provided another document, a certificate of completion dated June 30, 2017, which represents that she obtained “twelve contact hours” in coursework involving pain management and assessment. The certificate refers to the Respondent as “Dr. Patricia Chinwe Onuoha PhD, MD, DIP.”

The Respondent’s interview

19. Board staff conducted an under-oath interview of the Respondent on April 1, 2019. The Respondent stated that in or around June 2017, she began renting space in an office in Landover, Maryland under the name of “P & A Health Assessment and Management.” The Respondent stated that although she is allowed to practice medicine in Africa, she is not a licensed physician in the United States.

Consultant’s findings

20. The Board provided its investigative information to the Board’s Consultant for review. The Consultant issued a report dated July 23, 2019, concluding that the Respondent

attempted or offered to practice without a license, in violation of Health Occ. § 14-601. The Consultant found that the Respondent attempted or offered to practice medicine in that in she rented office space and in September 2018, applied to MDH for a laboratory license for purposes of opening a community clinic. In that application, the Respondent stated that she was an “MD.” The Respondent furnished the clinic with two examination tables, a stethoscope, a medical dictionary, and other appurtenances that are typically associated with a medical office. The Respondent advertised herself on a website, *paintreatmentdirectory.com*, describing herself as a medical doctor and a “seasoned Medical Practitioner.”

21. The Consultant found that the Respondent violated § 14-602(a), in that she represented herself to the public by her description of services, methods, procedures and otherwise, that she was authorized to practice medicine in this State, when she was not so authorized. The Respondent represented herself to the public through description of services, methods, procedures, through a laboratory application, on websites, and through setting up an office, that she was authorized to practice medicine, when she was not authorized under law to do so in this State.

22. The Consultant found that the Respondent violated Health Occ. § 14-602(b), in that the Respondent, in the laboratory application referred to above, in at least one training certificate, and on websites, referred to herself as “Dr.,” “doctor”, and “M.D.,” with the intent to represent that she practices medicine, without being licensed to practice medicine in this State

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, Panel B concludes that the Respondent practiced, attempted to practice, or offered to medicine without a license, in violation of Health Occ. § 14-601. Panel B further concludes that the Respondent represented to the public by description of services, methods, procedures and otherwise, that she was authorized to practice medicine in this

State, when she was not so authorized, in violation of § 14-602(a), and used the words or terms “Dr.,” “doctor” and “M.D.” with the intent to represent that she practices medicine, without being licensed to practice medicine in this State, in violation of § 14-602(b).

ORDER

It is thus, by Disciplinary Panel B of the Board, hereby:

ORDERED that the Respondent shall continue to **CEASE AND DESIST** from practicing, attempting to practice, or offering to practice medicine in this State; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall **CEASE AND DESIST** from misrepresenting herself to the public, by description of services, methods, procedures, or otherwise, that she is authorized to practice medicine in this State, and from using the words or terms “Dr.,” “doctor”, or “M.D.” with the intent to represent that the Respondent practices medicine; and it is further

ORDERED that within **TWO (2) YEARS** from the effective date of this Consent Order, the Respondent shall pay a civil fine in the amount of **TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$2,500)**. The payment or payments shall be made by money order or bank certified check(s) made payable to the Maryland Board of Physicians and mailed to P.O. Box 37217, Baltimore, Maryland 21297; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent’s failure to pay the **\$2,500** civil fine in full within **TWO (2) YEARS** from the effective date of this Consent Order shall be considered a violation of this Consent Order; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent is responsible for Respondent is responsible for all costs incurred in fulfilling the terms and conditions 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. The Executive Director 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 this Consent Order is a public document. *See* Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. §§ 1-607, 14-411.1(b)(2) and Gen. Prov. § 4-333(b)(6).

12/11/2019
Date

Signature on File

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

CONSENT

I, Patricia C. Onuoha, assert that I am aware of my right to consult with and be represented by counsel in considering this Consent Order and in any proceedings that would otherwise result from the charges currently pending. I have chosen to proceed without counsel, and I acknowledge that the decision to proceed without counsel is freely and voluntarily made.

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. § 14-405 and Md. Code Ann., State Gov't §§ 10-201 *et seq.* concerning the pending charges. I waive these rights 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.

12/5/19
Date

Signature on File

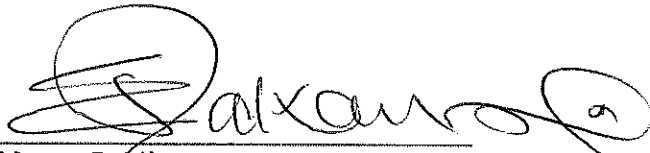
Patricia C. Onuoha
Respondent

NOTARY

STATE OF MARYLAND
CITY/COUNTY OF PRINCE GEORGES

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 6TH day of DEC. 2019, before me, a Notary Public of the foregoing State and City/County, personally appeared PATRICIA C. ONUOHA, and made oath in due form of law that signing the foregoing Consent Order was her voluntary act and deed.

AS WITNESSETH my hand and notarial seal.



Notary Public

My Commission expires: 03/14/2023