

FILED

AUGUST 29, 2008

**NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD
OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

In the Matter of:

RUTH CAMPO, M.D.

CONSENT ORDER

This matter was opened before the New Jersey State Board of Medical Examiners upon the Board's receipt of a report from the Medical Practitioner Review Panel detailing the results of the Panel's investigation of information regarding a civil malpractice action brought by the estate of patient M.P. against respondent Ruth Campo, M.D. Specifically, the Panel received information detailing that a payment of \$900,000 was made on respondent's behalf to settle the civil malpractice action, which action was based on allegations that respondent failed to diagnose and treat necrotizing fasciitis, which in turn resulted in an above the knee amputation, septic shock, cardiac arrest, coma and the patient's death. During the pendency of its investigation, the Panel reviewed available information, to include without limitation the emergency room records for the visit during which respondent provided care to M.P. and expert reports and deposition transcripts from the civil action. The Panel additionally considered testimony offered by respondent when she appeared before the Panel on May 16, 2008.

At the conclusion of its investigation, the Panel found that respondent, an emergency room physician, provided care to patient M.P. when M.P., a 44 year old woman, presented in the emergency room at

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approximately 9:30 a.m. on July 12, 2002. Upon arrival at the emergency room, M.P.'s temperature was recorded to be 95.2, and her blood pressure was recorded as being 86/p. Respondent conducted an examination of the patient, and found, among other items, soft tissue swelling in the area of the left leg posterior thigh. Respondent ordered tests to include x-rays of the lumbar spine and left femur and blood tests. The blood tests revealed that M.P.'s white blood cell count was elevated and that her neutrophils were significantly elevated. M.P.'s temperature was never taken a second time, nor was any second blood pressure reading recorded.

At 1:15 p.m., respondent discharged M.P. from the emergency room with a diagnosis of "acute sciatica." M.P.'s condition deteriorated significantly thereafter, and she was later admitted to the hospital a second time and treated for septic shock. A radical amputation of M.P.'s left leg and hip was performed, however she died in the I.C.U. shortly thereafter. The cause of M.P.'s death was recorded as sepsis secondary to necrotizing fasciitis.

The Panel concluded that respondent engaged in gross negligence when she failed to rule out sepsis during M.P.'s emergency room visit. Respondent was aware, at the time of M.P.'s emergency room visit, that the patient had significantly abnormal vital signs (to include hypothermia and hypotension), soft tissue swelling and tenderness of the posterior left thigh, and abnormal lab results (to include an elevated white blood cell count and a significant left shift in neutrophils.) With all that information available, the Panel concluded that respondent was grossly negligent to have discharged M.P.

with a diagnosis of acute sciatica, without further exploring the possibility that M.P. was then in septic shock.

Additionally, the Panel found that respondent failed to maintain medical records in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Board's record-keeping rule, N.J.A.C. 13:35-6.5. While respondent testified, when appearing before the Panel, that she saw M.P. three times when M.P. was in the emergency room, had a nurse take a second blood pressure reading, and spoke with M.P.'s treating orthopedist (whom she claimed agreed with her recommended course of action), the hospital record is devoid of any notations or documentation to support her claims.

The Board herein adopts the above delineated findings made by the Panel. Based thereon, the Board concludes that cause for disciplinary action against respondent exists pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(c) and 45:1-21(h). Respondent neither admits nor denies the findings made by the Board, but has agreed to enter into this Order to settle this matter. The parties desiring to resolve this matter without need for formal disciplinary proceedings, and the Board being satisfied that the need for such proceedings is obviated by the entry of the within Order, and being further satisfied that good cause exists to support entry of the within Order,

IT IS on this 13th day of August, 2008

ORDERED AND AGREED:

1. Respondent Ruth Campo, M.D., is hereby reprimanded for having engaged in gross negligence in the care she provided to patient M.P., and for having failed to maintain medical records in a manner

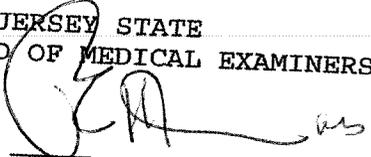
consistent with the requirements of the Board's record-keeping rule.

2. Respondent is assessed a civil penalty in the amount of \$5,000, which penalty shall be payable in full upon entry of this Order.

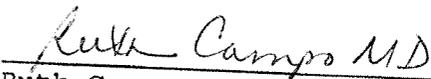
3. Respondent shall attend and successfully complete a continuing medical education course, acceptable to the Board, in medical record-keeping. The course is to be completed within six months of the date of entry of this Order. Prior to commencing said course, respondent shall provide information detailing the content of the course she intends to take (i.e., a course syllabus) to the Board office, and shall obtain approval from the Board for any proposed course. Respondent shall additionally be responsible to ensure that the course provider submits written confirmation to the Board, upon respondent's completion of the course offering, documenting that respondent attended and successfully completed said course.

NEW JERSEY STATE
BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

By:


Paul C. Mendelowitz, M.D.
Board President

I consent to the entry of this Order
by the State Board of Medical
Examiners.


Ruth Campo, M.D.

**NOTICE OF REPORTING PRACTICES OF BOARD
REGARDING DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:14B-3(3), all orders of the New Jersey State Board of Medical Examiners are available for public inspection. Should any inquiry be made concerning the status of a licensee, the inquirer will be informed of the existence of the order and a copy will be provided if requested. All evidentiary hearings, proceedings on motions or other applications which are conducted as public hearings and the record, including the transcript and documents marked in evidence, are available for public inspection, upon request.

Pursuant to 45 CFR Subtitle A 60.8, the Board is obligated to report to the National Practitioners Data Bank any action relating to a physician which is based on reasons relating to professional competence or professional conduct:

- (1) Which revokes or suspends (or otherwise restricts) a license,
- (2) Which censures, reprimands or places on probation,
- (3) Under which a license is surrendered.

Pursuant to 45 CFR Section 61.7, the Board is obligated to report to the Healthcare Integrity and Protection (HIP) Data Bank, any formal or official actions, such as revocation or suspension of a license (and the length of any such suspension), reprimand, censure or probation or any other loss of license or the right to apply for, or renew, a license of the provider, supplier, or practitioner, whether by operation of law, voluntary surrender, non-renewability, or otherwise, or any other negative action or finding by such Federal or State agency that is publicly available information.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:9-19.13, if the Board refuses to issue, suspends, revokes or otherwise places conditions on a license or permit, it is obligated to notify each licensed health care facility and health maintenance organization with which a licensee is affiliated and every other board licensee in this state with whom he or she is directly associated in private medical practice.

In accordance with an agreement with the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, a list of all disciplinary orders are provided to that organization on a monthly basis.

Within the month following entry of an order, a summary of the order will appear on the public agenda for the next monthly Board meeting and is forwarded to those members of the public requesting a copy. In addition, the same summary will appear in the minutes of that Board meeting, which are also made available to those requesting a copy.

Within the month following entry of an order, a summary of the order will appear in a Monthly Disciplinary Action Listing which is made available to those members of the public requesting a copy.

On a periodic basis the Board disseminates to its licensees a newsletter which includes a brief description of all of the orders entered by the Board.

From time to time, the Press Office of the Division of Consumer Affairs may issue releases including the summaries of the content of public orders.

Nothing herein is intended in any way to limit the Board, the Division or the Attorney General from disclosing any public document.