

BEFORE THE
NORTH CAROLINA MEDICAL BOARD

In re:)
)
Benedict Onwukwe Okwara, M.D.) NON-DISCIPLINARY
) CONSENT ORDER
Respondent.)

This matter is before the North Carolina Medical Board ("Board") regarding information provided to the Board concerning Benedict Onwukwe Okwara, M.D. ("Dr. Okwara"). Dr. Okwara makes the following admissions and the Board makes the following findings and conclusions:

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Board is a body duly organized under the laws of North Carolina and is the proper party to bring this proceeding under the authority granted it in Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the North Carolina General Statutes and the rules and regulations promulgated thereto.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Dr. Okwara was first issued a license to practice medicine and surgery by the Board on or about March 16, 1991, license number 33878.

At all times relevant hereto, Dr. Okwara practiced internal medicine in Monroe, North Carolina.

In December 2015, the Board received a complaint from a physician who had recently treated one of Dr. Okwara's patients ("Patient A"). Specifically, the physician complained that Dr. Okwara had ordered a thyroid laboratory test and then failed to address the abnormal test results with Patient A.

The Board's investigation revealed that on September 9, 2015, Dr. Okwara treated Patient A at FirstCare Monroe. Due to her symptoms, Dr. Okwara ordered laboratory tests related to thyroid function. Patient A's thyroid studies were significant for hyperthyroidism. Dr. Okwara did not inform Patient A of the abnormal laboratory test results.

Patient A was seen again by Dr. Okwara on September 23, 2015, for other symptoms. Patient A was diagnosed as being pregnant at this visit. However, Dr. Okwara again failed to make Patient A aware of the abnormal thyroid test results.

Patient A was seen again by Dr. Okwara on October 19, 2015, for urinary tract infection symptoms and again was not informed of the abnormal thyroid test results.

Patient A was later seen on November 13, 2015, by a different provider who diagnosed her with a heart murmur and a grossly enlarged thyroid. Patient A indicated at this visit that she was unaware of the thyroid test results.

The Board had Dr. Okwara's care of Patient A reviewed by an independent internal medicine practitioner who concluded that

Dr. Okwara's diagnosis and treatment of Patient A failed to conform to the standards of acceptable and prevailing medical practice in North Carolina. Specifically, the reviewer found that Dr. Okwara failed to properly diagnose Patient A with hyperthyroidism or to appropriately treat or recognize the potential harm of hyperthyroidism in a pregnant patient.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Dr. Okwara's treatment of Patient A as described above constitutes unprofessional conduct, including, but not limited to, departure from, or the failure to conform to, the standards of acceptable and prevailing medical practice within the meaning of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-14(a)(6) and grounds exist under that section of the North Carolina General Statutes for the Board to annul, suspend, revoke or limit Dr. Okwara's North Carolina medical license or to deny any application he might make in the future for a license to practice medicine.

PROCEDURAL STIPULATIONS

Dr. Okwara acknowledges and agrees that the Board has jurisdiction over him and over the subject matter of this case.

Dr. Okwara knowingly waives his right to any hearing and to any judicial review or appeal in this case.

Dr. Okwara acknowledges that he has read and understands this Non-Disciplinary Consent Order and enters into it voluntarily.

Dr. Okwara desires to resolve this matter without the need for more formal proceedings.

The Board has determined that it is in the public interest to resolve this case as set forth below.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, with Dr. Okwara's consent, it is ORDERED that:

1. The Board shall issue Dr. Okwara a PUBLIC LETTER OF CONCERN. This Non-Disciplinary Consent Order shall serve as that public letter of concern.

2. Dr. Okwara must complete a comprehensive professional assessment ("CPA") in Internal Medicine approved by the Office of the Medical Director of the Board within six (6) months of the date of the execution of this Non-Disciplinary Consent Order.

3. Dr. Okwara must complete all remediation recommended by the CPA within one (1) year of the date of the execution of this Non-Disciplinary Consent Order. The time period for completing the recommended remediation may be extended by the Board if the Board receives notice from the CPA that additional time is necessary to complete the remediation.

4. Dr. Okwara shall obey all laws. Likewise, he shall obey all rules and regulations involving the practice of medicine.

5. Dr. Okwara shall notify the Board in writing of any change in his residence or practice addresses within ten (10) days of the change.

6. Dr. Okwara shall meet with the Board or members of the Board for an investigative interview at such times as requested by the Board.

7. If Dr. Okwara fails to comply with any of the terms of this Non-Disciplinary Consent Order, that failure shall constitute unprofessional conduct within the meaning of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-14(a)(6) and shall be grounds, after any required notice and hearing, for the Board to annul, suspend or revoke his medical license and to deny any application he might make in the future or then have pending for a license.

8. This Non-Disciplinary Consent Order shall take effect immediately upon its execution by both Dr. Okwara and the Board, and it shall continue in effect until specifically ordered otherwise by the Board.

9. Dr. Okwara hereby waives any requirement under any law or rule that this Non-Disciplinary Consent Order be served on him.

10. Upon execution by Dr. Okwara and the Board, this Non-Disciplinary Consent Order shall become a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes and shall be subject to public inspection and

dissemination pursuant to the provisions thereof. Additionally, it will be reported to persons, entities, agencies and clearinghouses as required and permitted by law including, but not limited to, the Federation of State Medical Boards and the National Practitioner Data Bank.

By Order of the North Carolina Medical Board this the 7th day of September, 2016.

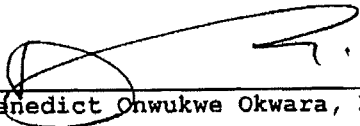
NORTH CAROLINA MEDICAL BOARD

By:



Pascal O. Udekwu, M.D.
President

Consented to this the 1st day of SEPTEMBER, 2016.


Benedict Onwukwe Okwara, M.D.

State of North Carolina

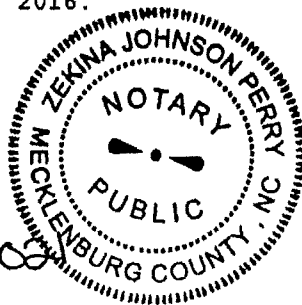
County of Union

I, Zekina Johnson Perry, a Notary Public for the above named County and State, do hereby certify that Benedict Onwukwe Okwara, M.D., personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing instrument.

Witness my hand and official seal

This the 1st day of SEPTEMBER, 2016.


Notary Public



(SEAL)

My Commission expires: August 14, 2021