

BEFORE THE  
NORTH CAROLINA MEDICAL BOARD

In re: )  
 )  
Benedict Onwukwe Okwara, M.D., ) 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 to 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 by the Board on or about March 16, 1991, license number 33878.

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

On September 7, 2016, Dr. Okwara entered into a Non-Disciplinary Consent Order ("2016 Consent Order") with the Board.

The 2016 Consent Order issued Dr. Okwara a Public Letter of Concern and required, among other things, that Dr. Okwara complete a comprehensive professional assessment in internal medicine and complete all remediation recommendations made as a result of the assessment. This action was based on findings that Dr. Okwara failed to properly treat one of his patients, as detailed in the 2016 Consent Order.

In December 2016, Dr. Okwara obtained a comprehensive professional assessment with The Center for Personalized Education for Professionals ("CPEP"). CPEP found areas of educational need and developed a remedial educational plan to enhance Dr. Okwara's medical knowledge ("CPEP Plan"). The Board thereafter received five progress reports on an approximately quarterly basis from July 2017 to March 2020, detailing Dr. Okwara's educational activities in the CPEP Plan. These reports showed that Dr. Okwara actively participated and engaged in the CPEP Plan. CPEP authored a Summary Report in March 2020 and noted that Dr. Okwara had made significant progress with the CPEP Plan, but ultimately concluded that Dr. Okwara did not successfully complete the entire CPEP Plan.

Based on the CPEP Summary Report, the Board had the care of eight of Dr. Okwara's patients reviewed by an independent medical expert who opined that the care rendered by Dr. Okwara was below the standard of care in North Carolina in seven of the eight patients. The Board notes that the focus of the independent

medical expert's criticisms surrounded Dr. Okwara's lack of thorough and detailed medical record documentation.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

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

#### 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, with the advice of legal counsel, acknowledges that he has read and understands this 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 matter as set forth below.

ORDER

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

1. Dr. Okwara shall ensure that a physician assistant or nurse practitioner, who is actively licensed in North Carolina, shall work with and assist Dr. Okwara with all clinical patient encounters Dr. Okwara has with all patients that Dr. Okwara treats. The name of the accompanying physician assistant or nurse practitioner shall be included in each medical record for all patients that Dr. Okwara treats. The accompanying physician assistant or nurse practitioner shall assist Dr. Okwara with documentation and patient care issues.

2. Dr. Okwara shall utilize an outside healthcare consulting organization to assist him with coding, billing, medical records, and medical practice administration.

3. Six months from the effective date of this Consent Order, the Board shall conduct a follow-up medical record review of patients that Dr. Okwara has treated. The purpose of this medical record review will be to assess Dr. Okwara's treatment of patients after he ended the CPEP Plan remediation efforts. Specifically, the timeframe of Dr. Okwara's care of these patients that shall be reviewed shall be from April 2020 going forward (i.e., the Board will focus the review on care Dr. Okwara rendered to patients after Dr. Okwara ended participation in the CPEP Plan and the CPEP Summary Report was received). Based on the outcome of this follow-

up post remediation medical record review, the Board may take additional action against Dr. Okwara's North Carolina medical license.

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

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

6. Upon request, Dr. Okwara shall provide the Board with any information the Board deems necessary to verify compliance with the terms and conditions of this Consent Order.

7. If Dr. Okwara fails to comply with any of the terms of this 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 license to practice medicine and to deny any application he might make in the future or then have pending for a license to practice medicine.

8. This 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 Consent Order be served on him.

10. Upon execution by Dr. Okwara and the Board, this 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 17th day of June, 2022.

NORTH CAROLINA MEDICAL BOARD

By:   
John W. Rusher, M.D., J.D.  
President

Consented to this the 7 day of June, 2022.

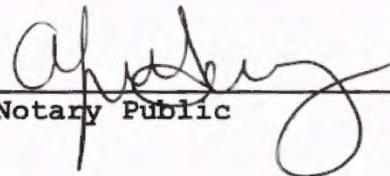
  
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Benedict Onwukwe Okwara, M.D.

State of NC

County of Union

I, Benedict Onwukwe Okwara, 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 7<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2022.

  
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Notary Public

(Official Seal)

My Commission Expires: 7/26/25