



April 16, 2024

**Via Attorney of Record**

Sheli Ruth Garrett-Albaugh, D.O.  
Carteret OB/GYN Associates  
3511 John Platt Drive  
Morehead City, North Carolina 28557

Dear Dr. Garrett-Albaugh:

The North Carolina Medical Board (“Board”) has concluded its investigation regarding your care of Patient A. As a result, the Board voted to issue you this public letter of concern. The Board does not consider a public letter of concern to be a disciplinary action or a limitation or restriction on your license.

Patient A, a 29-year-old female, was seen at your practice in March 2022, with complaints of pelvic pain. An ultrasound was performed and showed a possible gestational sac in the uterus. Patient A’s quantitative human chorionic gonadotropin (“hCG”) level was ordered and returned at 1,398. Repeat testing was ordered for 48 hours, and Patient A was instructed to follow-up with you via a telehealth appointment two days later.

Later that evening, Patient A experienced worsening pelvic pain and reported to a local emergency room. A repeat ultrasound was performed, and her hCG level was tested, and was 1,498. Patient A’s differential diagnosis included early viable intrauterine gestation. Patient A was discharged home with a recommendation to repeat laboratory hCG test and an ultrasound in 48-72 hours.

Patient A returned to your practice the next day and saw another healthcare provider. She reported improvement from her pelvic pain from the evening before, but was experiencing nausea. Patient A was prescribed Zofran. Since Patient A was already scheduled for an hCG test and appointment with you the following day to discuss the results, no repeat testing was performed at this visit.

Patient A returned to your office the next day for a recheck of her hCG level. She saw you later that day via a telehealth appointment. The hCG test results were not back at the time of the appointment with you, but you were verbally informed that Patient A’s hCG level from earlier that day returned at 1,448. Without further confirmation of this result and without performing a physical examination, you diagnosed Patient A with an ectopic pregnancy and prescribed methotrexate.

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Patient A's hCG levels continued to increase following the methotrexate treatment, and it was later determined that you were provided an incorrect hCG level. Patient A's actual hCG level on this day was 3,538. On day seven following the methotrexate treatment, an ultrasound showed a non-viable intrauterine pregnancy. Patient A was prescribed Cytotec, which failed to expel the uterine contents. She later underwent dilation and curettage.

The Board had your care of Patient A reviewed by an independent medical expert. The reviewing expert found that your care of Patient A fell below the standard of care in North Carolina. Specifically, the reviewing expert found that:

1. You failed to perform a physical examination of Patient A prior to diagnosing her with an ectopic pregnancy.
2. You failed to follow Patient A's hCG levels long enough to diagnosis an ectopic pregnancy before treatment.

The Board notes that, as a result of this case, you have changed your practice such that you do not accept verbal hCG laboratory value reports and will review documented hCG laboratory reports prior to moving forward with patient care.

The Board urges you to take steps to ensure that the conduct giving rise to the Board's concerns does not happen again. Otherwise, the Board may take additional action against your license to practice medicine. If that happens, this letter may be reviewed in determining the appropriate action.

This letter is a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes and is subject to public inspection and dissemination as required by that law. It will be reported to the Federation of State Medical Boards, and it may be reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank if required by law.

Sincerely,



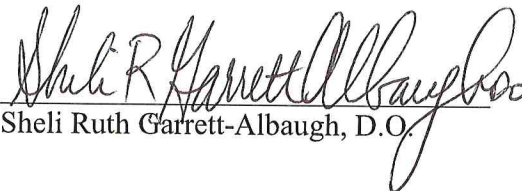
Christine M. Khandelwal, D.O., MHPE  
President

CMK/PFB/bgs

Consent and Waiver

I, Sheli Ruth Garrett-Albaugh, D.O., would like to resolve this matter without the need for more formal proceedings and consent to the Board's issuance of this public letter of concern in resolution of the above matter. I hereby waive any requirement under any law or rule that this public letter of concern be served on me.

Consented to this the 15 day of April, 2024.

  
Sheli Ruth Garrett-Albaugh, D.O.

State of North Carolina

County of Carteret

I, Brittany Lawrence Noe, do hereby certify that Sheli Ruth Garrett-Albaugh, D.O. personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing instrument.

Witness my hand and official seal this the 15<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2024.

  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: 12-15-2026

(Official Seal)

