

BEFORE THE
MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Accusation
Against:

Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D.

Physician's & Surgeon's
Certificate No A48224

Respondent

Case No. 800-2018-046138

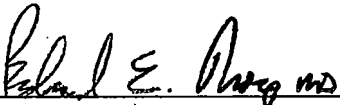
DECISION

The attached Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order is hereby adopted as the Decision and Order of the Medical Board of California, Department of Consumer Affairs, State of California.

This Decision shall become effective at 5:00 p.m. on March 26, 2021.

IT IS SO ORDERED February 25, 2021

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

By: 
Richard E. Thorp, M.D., Chair
Panel B

1 XAVIER BECERRA
Attorney General of California
2 MATTHEW M. DAVIS
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
3 GIOVANNI F. MEJIA
Deputy Attorney General
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8 *Attorneys for Complainant*

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10 **BEFORE THE**
MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
11 **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
12

13 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2018-046138

14 **KENNETH CARL RUSS, M.D.**
490 South Farrell Drive, Suite C 106
15 Palm Springs, CA 92262

OAH No. 2020070548

16 **Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate**
No. A 48224,

**STIPULATED SETTLEMENT AND
DISCIPLINARY ORDER**

17 Respondent.
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19 IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED AND AGREED by and between the parties to the above-
20 entitled proceedings that the following matters are true:

21 **PARTIES**

22 1. William Prasifka (Complainant) is the Executive Director of the Medical Board of
23 California (Board). This action was previously brought by Christine J. Lally solely in her prior
24 official capacity as Interim Executive Director of the Board. Complainant is represented in this
25 matter by Xavier Becerra, Attorney General of the State of California, by Giovanni F. Mejia,
26 Deputy Attorney General.

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1 2. Respondent Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D. (Respondent) is represented in this proceeding
2 by attorneys Dennis K. Ames, Esq. and Pogey Henderson, Esq., whose address is: La Follette,
3 Johnson, DeHaas, Fesler & Ames, 2677 North Main Street, Suite 901, Santa Ana, CA 92705.

4 3. On or about April 30, 1990, the Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
5 No. A 48224 to Respondent. The Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and effect
6 at all times relevant to the charges brought in Accusation No. 800-2018-046138, and will expire
7 on March 31, 2022, unless renewed.

8 **JURISDICTION**

9 4. Accusation No. 800-2018-046138 was filed before the Board, and is currently
10 pending against Respondent. The Accusation and all other statutorily required documents were
11 properly served on Respondent on March 23, 2020. Respondent timely filed his Notice of
12 Defense contesting the Accusation.

13 5. A copy of Accusation No. 800-2018-046138 is attached as exhibit A and incorporated
14 herein by reference.

15 **ADVISEMENT AND WAIVERS**

16 6. Respondent has carefully read, fully discussed with counsel, and understands the
17 charges and allegations in Accusation No. 800-2018-046138. Respondent has also carefully read,
18 fully discussed with his counsel, and understands the effects of this Stipulated Settlement and
19 Disciplinary Order.

20 7. Respondent is fully aware of his legal rights in this matter, including the right to a
21 hearing on the charges and allegations in the Accusation; the right to confront and cross-examine
22 the witnesses against him; the right to present evidence and to testify on his own behalf; the right
23 to the issuance of subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of
24 documents; the right to reconsideration and court review of an adverse decision; and all other
25 rights accorded by the California Administrative Procedure Act and other applicable laws.

26 8. Respondent voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently waives and gives up each and
27 every right set forth above.

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1 CULPABILITY

2 9. Respondent agrees that, at an administrative hearing, Complainant could establish a
3 prima facie case with respect to the charges and allegations in Accusation No. 800-2018-046138,
4 and Respondent hereby gives up his right to contest those charges.

5 10. Respondent agrees that if an accusation and/or petition to revoke probation is filed
6 against him before the Board, or, if he ever petitions for early termination or modification of any
7 term or condition of probation, all of the charges and allegations contained in Accusation
8 No. 800-2018-046138 shall be deemed true, correct and fully admitted by Respondent for
9 purposes of any such proceeding or any other licensing proceeding involving Respondent in the
10 State of California.

11 11. Respondent agrees that his Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate is subject to
12 discipline and to be bound by the Disciplinary Order below, and that failure to comply with the
13 Disciplinary Order shall constitute unprofessional conduct and grounds for further disciplinary
14 action.

15 CONTINGENCY

16 12. This stipulation shall be subject to approval by the Medical Board of California.
17 Respondent understands and agrees that counsel for Complainant and the staff of the Medical
18 Board of California may communicate directly with the Board regarding this stipulation and
19 settlement, without notice to or participation by Respondent or his counsel. By signing the
20 stipulation, Respondent understands and agrees that he may not withdraw his agreement or seek
21 to rescind the stipulation prior to the time the Board considers and acts upon it. If the Board fails
22 to adopt this stipulation as its Decision and Order, the Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary
23 Order shall be of no force or effect, except for this paragraph, it shall be inadmissible in any legal
24 action between the parties, and the Board shall not be disqualified from further action by having
25 considered this matter.

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1 **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS**

2 13. This Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order is intended by the parties herein to
3 be an integrated writing representing the complete, final and exclusive embodiment of the
4 agreements of the parties in the above-entitled matter.

5 14. The parties understand and agree that Portable Document Format (PDF) and facsimile
6 copies of this Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order, including PDF and facsimile
7 signatures thereto, shall have the same force and effect as the originals.

8 15. In consideration of the foregoing admissions and stipulations, the parties agree that
9 the Board may, without further notice or opportunity to be heard by the Respondent, issue and
10 enter the following Disciplinary Order:

11 **DISCIPLINARY ORDER**

12 1. **PUBLIC REPRIMAND.** IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Physician's and Surgeon's
13 Certificate No. A 48224 issued to Respondent Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D. is hereby publicly
14 reprimanded pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 2227, subdivision (a),
15 paragraph (4). This public reprimand, which is issued in connection with Respondent's care and
16 treatment of patients as set forth in Accusation No. 800-2018-046138, is as follows:

17 You committed repeated negligent acts in violation of Business and Professions Code
18 section 2234, subdivision (c) related to your prescribing of controlled substances to patients
19 as more particularly set forth in Accusation No. 800-2018-046138.

20 2. **PRESCRIBING PRACTICES COURSE.** Within 60 calendar days of the effective
21 date of this Decision, Respondent shall enroll in a course in prescribing practices approved in
22 advance by the Board or its designee. Respondent shall provide the approved course provider
23 with any information and documents that the approved course provider may deem pertinent.
24 Respondent shall participate in and successfully complete the classroom component of the course
25 not later than six (6) months after Respondent's initial enrollment. Respondent shall successfully
26 complete any other component of the course within one (1) year of enrollment. The prescribing
27 practices course shall be at Respondent's expense and shall be in addition to the Continuing
28 Medical Education (CME) requirements for renewal of licensure.

1 A prescribing practices course taken after the acts that gave rise to the charges in the
2 Accusation, but prior to the effective date of the Decision may, in the sole discretion of the Board
3 or its designee, be accepted towards the fulfillment of this condition if the course would have
4 been approved by the Board or its designee had the course been taken after the effective date of
5 this Decision.

6 Respondent shall submit a certification of successful completion to the Board or its
7 designee not later than 15 calendar days after successfully completing the course, or not later than
8 15 calendar days after the effective date of the Decision, whichever is later.

9 3. MEDICAL RECORD KEEPING COURSE. Within 60 calendar days of the effective
10 date of this Decision, Respondent shall enroll in a course in medical record keeping approved in
11 advance by the Board or its designee. Respondent shall provide the approved course provider
12 with any information and documents that the approved course provider may deem pertinent.
13 Respondent shall participate in and successfully complete the classroom component of the course
14 not later than six (6) months after Respondent's initial enrollment. Respondent shall successfully
15 complete any other component of the course within one (1) year of enrollment. The medical
16 record keeping course shall be at Respondent's expense and shall be in addition to the Continuing
17 Medical Education (CME) requirements for renewal of licensure.

18 A medical record keeping course taken after the acts that gave rise to the charges in the
19 Accusation, but prior to the effective date of the Decision may, in the sole discretion of the Board
20 or its designee, be accepted towards the fulfillment of this condition if the course would have
21 been approved by the Board or its designee had the course been taken after the effective date of
22 this Decision.

23 Respondent shall submit a certification of successful completion to the Board or its
24 designee not later than 15 calendar days after successfully completing the course, or not later than
25 15 calendar days after the effective date of the Decision, whichever is later.

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ACCEPTANCE

I have carefully read the above Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order and have fully discussed it with my attorneys, Dennis K. Ames, Esq. or Poge Henderson, Esq., or both. I understand the stipulation and the effect it will have on my Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate. I enter into this Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently, and agree to be bound by the Decision and Order of the Medical Board of California.

DATED:

Kenneth Russ, M.D.
1.27.21
KENNETH CARL RUSS, M.D.
Respondent

I have read and fully discussed with Respondent Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D. the terms and conditions and other matters contained in the above Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order. I approve its form and content.

DATED: 1/27/2021

Pogey Henderson
DENNIS K. AMES, ESQ.
POGEY HENDERSON, ESQ.
Attorneys for Respondent

ENDORSEMENT

The foregoing Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order is hereby respectfully submitted for consideration by the Medical Board of California.

DATED: January 28, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

XAVIER BECERRA
Attorney General of California
MATTHEW M. DAVIS
Supervising Deputy Attorney General

Giovanni F. Mejia
GIOVANNI F. MEJIA
Deputy Attorney General
Attorneys for Complainant

1 XAVIER BECERRA
Attorney General of California
2 MATTHEW M. DAVIS
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
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8 *Attorneys for Complainant*

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**BEFORE THE
MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2018-046138

Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D.
490 South Farrell Drive, Suite C 106
Palm Springs, CA 92262,

A C C U S A T I O N

**Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
No. A 48224,**

Respondent.

PARTIES

1. Christine J. Lally (Complainant) brings this Accusation solely in her official capacity as the Interim Executive Director of the Medical Board of California, Department of Consumer Affairs (Board).

2. On or about April 30, 1990, the Medical Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 48224 to Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D. (Respondent). The Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on March 31, 2020, unless renewed.

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1 JURISDICTION

2 3. This Accusation is brought before the Board, under the authority of the following
3 laws. All section references are to the Business and Professions Code (Code) unless otherwise
4 indicated.

5 4. Section 2227 of the Code states:

6 (a) A licensee whose matter has been heard by an administrative law judge of
7 the Medical Quality Hearing Panel as designated in Section 11371 of the Government
8 Code, or whose default has been entered, and who is found guilty, or who has entered
9 into a stipulation for disciplinary action with the board, may, in accordance with the
10 provisions of this chapter:

11 (1) Have his or her license revoked upon order of the board.

12 (2) Have his or her right to practice suspended for a period not to exceed one
13 year upon order of the board.

14 (3) Be placed on probation and be required to pay the costs of probation
15 monitoring upon order of the board.

16 (4) Be publicly reprimanded by the board. The public reprimand may include a
17 requirement that the licensee complete relevant educational courses approved by the
18 board.

19 (5) Have any other action taken in relation to discipline as part of an order of
20 probation, as the board or an administrative law judge may deem proper.

21 (b) Any matter heard pursuant to subdivision (a), except for warning letters,
22 medical review or advisory conferences, professional competency examinations,
23 continuing education activities, and cost reimbursement associated therewith that are
24 agreed to with the board and successfully completed by the licensee, or other matters
25 made confidential or privileged by existing law, is deemed public, and shall be made
26 available to the public by the board pursuant to Section 803.1.

27 5. Section 2234 of the Code, states:

28 The board shall take action against any licensee who is charged with
unprofessional conduct. In addition to other provisions of this article, unprofessional
conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) Violating or attempting to violate, directly or indirectly, assisting in or
abetting the violation of, or conspiring to violate any provision of this chapter.

...

(c) Repeated negligent acts. To be repeated, there must be two or more
negligent acts or omissions. An initial negligent act or omission followed by a
separate and distinct departure from the applicable standard of care shall constitute
repeated negligent acts.

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1 (1) An initial negligent diagnosis followed by an act or omission medically
2 appropriate for that negligent diagnosis of the patient shall constitute a single
negligent act.

3 (2) When the standard of care requires a change in the diagnosis, act, or
4 omission that constitutes the negligent act described in paragraph (1), including, but
5 not limited to, a reevaluation of the diagnosis or a change in treatment, and the
licensee's conduct departs from the applicable standard of care, each departure
constitutes a separate and distinct breach of the standard of care.

6
7 **FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

8 **(Repeated Negligent Acts)**

9 6. Respondent Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D. has subjected his Physician's and Surgeon's
10 Certificate No. A 48224 to disciplinary action under section 2234, as defined by section 2234,
11 subdivision (c), of the Code in that in that he committed repeated negligent acts in his care and
12 treatment of one or more patients. The circumstances are as follows:

13 **Patient A**

14 7. On multiple occasions beginning in or around 2007,¹ Respondent rendered medical
15 care and treatment to "Patient A,"² an adult female patient with a history of ailments including,
16 but not limited to, kidney stones, urinary tract infections and ureteral and bladder spasms.

17 8. On multiple occasions in or around August 2015 to January 2020, Respondent issued
18 a prescription for Norco³ 10 mg/325 mg, in a quantity corresponding to approximately eight to
19 twelve tablets per day, to Patient A for chronic pain.

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22 ¹ Any act or omission of Respondent alleged herein to have occurred more than seven
23 years prior to the filing of the instant Accusation is included for informational purposes only, and
is not alleged as a basis for disciplinary action.

24 ² Patients' true names are not used in the instant Accusation to maintain patient
25 confidentiality. The patients' true identities are known to Respondent or will be disclosed to
Respondent upon receipt of a duly-issued request for discovery in accordance with Government
Code section 11507.6.

26 ³ Norco is a brand name for the drug combination of hydrocodone (5 mg, 7.5 mg, or 10
27 mg) and acetaminophen (325 mg). It is a Schedule II controlled substance pursuant to Health and
28 Safety Code section 11055, subdivision (b), and a dangerous drug pursuant to Business and
Professions Code section 4022. Hydrocodone belongs to a class of drugs known as opioids. When
properly prescribed and indicated, it is used for the treatment of moderate to moderately severe
pain.

1 9. Respondent's medical records for Patient A fail to document the establishment or
2 existence of an adequate opioid therapy treatment plan during the course of Respondent's
3 prescribing of Norco to Patient A in or around August 2015 to January 2020.

4 10. Respondent's medical records for Patient A fail to document that Respondent
5 obtained adequate informed consent from Patient A for long-term opioid therapy during the
6 course of Respondent's prescribing of Norco to Patient A in or around August 2015 to
7 January 2020.

8 11. Respondent's medical records for Patient A fail to document that Respondent
9 adequately counseled Patient A regarding the overdose risks of opioid therapy during the course
10 of Respondent's prescribing of Norco to Patient A in or around August 2015 to January 2020.

11 12. In or around August 2015 to January 2020, Respondent committed negligent acts
12 related to his prescribing of Norco to Patient A for chronic pain including, but not limited to,
13 failing to adequately:

14 (a) Establish or document a treatment plan and objectives for opioid therapy;

15 (b) Obtain or document informed consent for long-term opioid therapy; or

16 (c) Counsel or document counseling of the patient regarding the risks of
17 opioid overdose.

18 Patient B

19 13. On multiple occasions beginning on or about January 6, 2012, Respondent rendered
20 medical care and treatment to "Patient B," an adult female patient with a history of ailments
21 including, but not limited to, chronic pain related to orthopedic deformities resulting from post-
22 polio syndrome.

23 14. On multiple occasions in or around January 2012 to January 2020, Respondent issued
24 a prescription for Norco 10 mg/325 mg to Patient B, in a quantity corresponding to approximately
25 eight to ten tablets per day, to Patient B for chronic pain.

26 15. Respondent's medical records for Patient B fail to document the establishment or
27 existence of an adequate opioid therapy treatment plan during the course of Respondent's
28 prescribing of Norco to Patient B in or around January 2012 to January 2020.

1 16. Respondent's medical records for Patient B fail to document that Respondent
2 obtained adequate informed consent from Patient B for long-term opioid therapy during the
3 course of Respondent's prescribing of Norco to Patient B in or around January 2012 to
4 January 2020.

5 17. Respondent's medical records for Patient B fail to document that Respondent
6 adequately counseled Patient B regarding the overdose risks of opioid therapy during the course
7 of Respondent's prescribing of Norco to Patient B in or around January 2012 to January 2020.

8 18. In or around January 2012 to January 2020, Respondent committed negligent acts
9 related to his prescribing of Norco to Patient B for chronic pain including, but not limited to,
10 failing to adequately:

- 11 (a) Establish or document a treatment plan and objectives for opioid therapy;
12 (b) Obtain or document informed consent for long-term opioid therapy; or
13 (c) Counsel or document counseling of the patient regarding the risks of
14 opioid overdose.

15 **Patient C**

16 19. On multiple occasions beginning in or around 2006, Respondent rendered medical
17 care and treatment to "Patient C," a male adult patient with a history of ailments including, but
18 not limited to, chronic pain, degenerative disc disease, degenerative joint disease, and opioid
19 dependence.

20 20. On multiple occasions in or around November 2010 to January 2020, Respondent
21 issued an opioid prescription to Patient C for chronic pain. This included, but was not limited to,
22 the issuance of multiple prescriptions for methadone,⁴ in quantities ranging from
23 approximately 60 mg to 150 mg per day.

24 21. Respondent's medical records for Patient C fail to document that Respondent
25 obtained adequate informed consent from Patient C for long-term opioid therapy during the

26 / / / /

27 ⁴ Methadone is a Schedule II controlled substance pursuant to Health and Safety Code
28 section 11055, subdivision (c), and a dangerous drug pursuant to Business and Professions Code
section 4022.

1 course of Respondent's prescribing of opioids to Patient C in or around November 2010 to
2 January 2020.

3 22. Respondent's medical records for Patient C fail to document that Respondent
4 adequately counseled Patient C regarding the overdose risks of opioid therapy during the course
5 of Respondent's prescribing of opioids to Patient C in or around November 2010 to January 2020.

6 23. In or around November 2010 to January 2020, Respondent committed negligent acts
7 related to his prescribing of one or more controlled substance medications to Patient C for pain
8 including, but not limited to, failing to adequately:

9 (a) Obtain or document informed consent for long-term opioid therapy; or

10 (b) Counsel or document counseling of the patient regarding the risks of
11 opioid overdose.

12 **SECOND CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

13 **(Violating the Medical Practice Act)**

14 24. Respondent Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D. has further subjected his Physician's and
15 Surgeon's Certificate No. A 48224 to disciplinary action under section 2234, as defined by
16 section 2234, subdivision (a), of the Code in that he violated or attempted to violate, directly or
17 indirectly, one or more provisions of the Medical Practice Act as more particularly alleged in
18 paragraphs 6 to 23, above, which are hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.

19 **DISCIPLINARY CONSIDERATIONS**

20 25. To determine the degree of discipline, if any, to be imposed on Respondent Kenneth
21 Carl Russ, M.D., Complainant alleges that on or about February 17, 2012, in a prior disciplinary
22 action titled *In the Matter of the Accusation Against Kenneth Russ, M.D.* before the Medical
23 Board of California, in Case No. 17-2008-189728, the Board issued a decision and disciplinary
24 order whereby it publicly reprimanded Respondent's Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A
25 48224 as follows:

26 During the interval between February 2008 and October 2008 you were the sole
27 physician practicing medicine at the PMS Treatment Clinic, a medical clinic owned
28 and operated by Helen Anderson, a person not licensed to render professional

1 services. Your practice of medicine at the PMS Treatment Clinic promoted and
2 furthered the corporate practice of medicine, in violation of both the Moscone-Knox
3 Professional Corporation Act and the Medical Practice Act, which constitutes
4 unprofessional conduct.

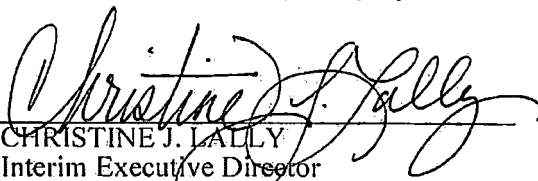
5 That decision is now final and is incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.

6 **PRAYER**

7 WHEREFORE, Complainant requests that a hearing be held on the matters herein alleged,
8 and that following the hearing, the Medical Board of California issue a decision:

- 9 1. Revoking or suspending Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 48224, issued
10 to Respondent Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D.;
- 11 2. Revoking, suspending or denying approval of Respondent Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D.'s
12 authority to supervise physician assistants and advanced practice nurses;
- 13 3. Ordering Respondent Kenneth Carl Russ, M.D., if placed on probation, to pay the
14 Board the costs of probation monitoring; and
- 15 4. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.

16
17 DATED: MAR 23 2020


CHRISTINE J. LALLY
Interim Executive Director
Medical Board of California
Department of Consumer Affairs
State of California
Complainant

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