

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

In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Richard Eugene Hiltner, M.D.

Physician's & Surgeon's
Certificate No. G 23982

Case No. 800-2019-052569

Respondent.

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 September 17, 2021.

IT IS SO ORDERED: August 18, 2021.

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA



Laurie Rose Lubiano, J.D., Vice Chair
Panel A

1 MATTHEW RODRIQUEZ
Acting Attorney General of California
2 E. A. JONES III
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
3 TRINA L. SAUNDERS
Deputy Attorney General
4 State Bar No. 207764
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7 *Attorneys for Complainant*

8
9 **BEFORE THE**
MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
10 **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
11 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

12 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

13 RICHARD EUGENE HILTNER, M.D.
14 169 East El Roblar
Ojai, CA 93023
15 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. G
16 23982,

17 Respondent.

Case No. 800-2019-052569

OAH No. 2021030348

**STIPULATED SETTLEMENT AND
DISCIPLINARY ORDER**

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

22 **PARTIES**

23 1. William Prasifka (Complainant) is the Executive Director of the Medical Board of
24 California (Board). He brought this action solely in his official capacity and is represented in this
25 matter by Matthew Rodriquez, Acting Attorney General of the State of California, by Trina L.
26 Saunders, Deputy Attorney General.

27 2. Respondent Richard Eugene Hiltner, M.D. (Respondent) is representing himself in
28 this proceeding and has chosen not to exercise his right to be represented by counsel.

1 3. On or about January 26, 1973, the Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
2 No. G 23982 to Respondent. The Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and
3 effect at all times relevant to the charges brought in Accusation No. 800-2019-052569, and will
4 expire on October 31, 2022, unless renewed.

5 **JURISDICTION**

6 4. Accusation No. 800-2019-052569, was filed before the Board, and is currently
7 pending against Respondent. The Accusation and all other statutorily required documents were
8 properly served on Respondent on November 19, 2020. Respondent timely filed his Notice of
9 Defense contesting the Accusation.

10 5. A copy of Accusation No. 800-2019-052569 is attached as exhibit A and incorporated
11 herein by reference.

12 **ADVISEMENT AND WAIVERS**

13 6. Respondent has carefully read, and understands the charges and allegations in
14 Accusation No. 800-2019-052569. Respondent has also carefully read and understands the
15 effects of this Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order.

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

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

25 **CULPABILITY**

26 9. Respondent understands and agrees that the charges and allegations in Accusation
27 No. 800-2019-052569, if proven at a hearing, constitute cause for imposing discipline upon his
28 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate.

1 **DISCIPLINARY ORDER**

2 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. G 23982 issued
3 to Respondent Richard Eugene Hiltner, M.D., is revoked. However, the revocation is stayed and
4 Respondent is placed on probation for four (4) years on the following terms and conditions:

5 1. **EDUCATION COURSE.** Within 60 calendar days of the effective date of this
6 Decision, and on an annual basis thereafter, Respondent shall submit to the Board or its designee
7 for its prior approval educational program(s) or course(s) which shall not be less than 40 hours
8 per year, for each year of probation. The educational program(s) or course(s) shall be aimed at
9 correcting any areas of deficient practice or knowledge, specifically including pediatrics and
10 childhood vaccinations, and shall be Category I certified. The educational program(s) or
11 course(s) shall be at Respondent's expense and shall be in addition to the Continuing Medical
12 Education (CME) requirements for renewal of licensure. Following the completion of each
13 course, the Board or its designee may administer an examination to test Respondent's knowledge
14 of the course. Respondent shall provide proof of attendance for 65 hours of CME of which 40
15 hours were in satisfaction of this condition.

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

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

1 this Decision.

2 Respondent shall submit a certification of successful completion to the Board or its
3 designee not later than 15 calendar days after successfully completing the course, or not later than
4 15 calendar days after the effective date of the Decision, whichever is later.

5 3. PROFESSIONALISM PROGRAM (ETHICS COURSE). Within 60 calendar days of
6 the effective date of this Decision, Respondent shall enroll in a professionalism program, that
7 meets the requirements of Title 16, California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 1358.1.
8 Respondent shall participate in and successfully complete that program. Respondent shall
9 provide any information and documents that the program may deem pertinent. Respondent shall
10 successfully complete the classroom component of the program not later than six (6) months after
11 Respondent's initial enrollment, and the longitudinal component of the program not later than the
12 time specified by the program, but no later than one (1) year after attending the classroom
13 component. The professionalism program shall be at Respondent's expense and shall be in
14 addition to the Continuing Medical Education (CME) requirements for renewal of licensure.

15 A professionalism program taken after the acts that gave rise to the charges in the
16 Accusation, but prior to the effective date of the Decision may, in the sole discretion of the Board
17 or its designee, be accepted towards the fulfillment of this condition if the program would have
18 been approved by the Board or its designee had the program been taken after the effective date of
19 this Decision.

20 Respondent shall submit a certification of successful completion to the Board or its
21 designee not later than 15 calendar days after successfully completing the program or not later
22 than 15 calendar days after the effective date of the Decision, whichever is later.

23 4. PROHIBITED PRACTICE. During probation, Respondent is prohibited from
24 writing vaccine exemptions for any individual. After the effective date of this Decision, all
25 patients of Respondent to whom he has issued a vaccine exemption, shall be notified that the
26 Respondent is prohibited from writing vaccine exemptions. Any new patients seeking pediatric
27 care, and any patient seeking a vaccination exemption of any type must be provided this
28 notification at the time of their initial appointment.

1 Respondent shall maintain a log of all patients to whom the required oral notification was
2 made. The log shall contain the: 1) patient's name, address and phone number; 2) patient's
3 medical record number, if available; 3) the full name of the person making the notification; 4) the
4 date the notification was made; and 5) a description of the notification given. Respondent shall
5 keep this log in a separate file or ledger, in chronological order, shall make the log available for
6 immediate inspection and copying on the premises at all times during business hours by the Board
7 or its designee, and shall retain the log for the entire term of probation.

8 5. NOTIFICATION. Within seven (7) days of the effective date of this Decision, the
9 Respondent shall provide a true copy of this Decision and Accusation to the Chief of Staff or the
10 Chief Executive Officer at every hospital where privileges or membership are extended to
11 Respondent, at any other facility where Respondent engages in the practice of medicine,
12 including all physician and locum tenens registries or other similar agencies, and to the Chief
13 Executive Officer at every insurance carrier which extends malpractice insurance coverage to
14 Respondent. Respondent shall submit proof of compliance to the Board or its designee within 15
15 calendar days.

16 This condition shall apply to any change(s) in hospitals, other facilities or insurance carrier.

17 6. SUPERVISION OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND ADVANCED PRACTICE
18 NURSES. During probation, Respondent is prohibited from supervising physician assistants and
19 advanced practice nurses.

20 7. OBEY ALL LAWS. Respondent shall obey all federal, state and local laws, all rules
21 governing the practice of medicine in California and remain in full compliance with any court
22 ordered criminal probation, payments, and other orders.

23 8. QUARTERLY DECLARATIONS. Respondent shall submit quarterly declarations
24 under penalty of perjury on forms provided by the Board, stating whether there has been
25 compliance with all the conditions of probation.

26 Respondent shall submit quarterly declarations not later than 10 calendar days after the end
27 of the preceding quarter.

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1 9. GENERAL PROBATION REQUIREMENTS.

2 Compliance with Probation Unit

3 Respondent shall comply with the Board's probation unit.

4 Address Changes

5 Respondent shall, at all times, keep the Board informed of Respondent's business and
6 residence addresses, email address (if available), and telephone number. Changes of such
7 addresses shall be immediately communicated in writing to the Board or its designee. Under no
8 circumstances shall a post office box serve as an address of record, except as allowed by Business
9 and Professions Code section 2021, subdivision (b).

10 Place of Practice

11 Respondent shall not engage in the practice of medicine in Respondent's or patient's place
12 of residence, unless the patient resides in a skilled nursing facility or other similar licensed
13 facility.

14 License Renewal

15 Respondent shall maintain a current and renewed California physician's and surgeon's
16 license.

17 Travel or Residence Outside California

18 Respondent shall immediately inform the Board or its designee, in writing, of travel to any
19 areas outside the jurisdiction of California which lasts, or is contemplated to last, more than thirty
20 (30) calendar days.

21 In the event Respondent should leave the State of California to reside or to practice,
22 Respondent shall notify the Board or its designee in writing 30 calendar days prior to the dates of
23 departure and return.

24 10. INTERVIEW WITH THE BOARD OR ITS DESIGNEE. Respondent shall be
25 available in person upon request for interviews either at Respondent's place of business or at the
26 probation unit office, with or without prior notice throughout the term of probation.

27 11. NON-PRACTICE WHILE ON PROBATION. Respondent shall notify the Board or
28 its designee in writing within 15 calendar days of any periods of non-practice lasting more than

1 30 calendar days and within 15 calendar days of Respondent's return to practice. Non-practice is
2 defined as any period of time Respondent is not practicing medicine as defined in Business and
3 Professions Code sections 2051 and 2052 for at least 40 hours in a calendar month in direct
4 patient care, clinical activity or teaching, or other activity as approved by the Board. If
5 Respondent resides in California and is considered to be in non-practice, Respondent shall
6 comply with all terms and conditions of probation. All time spent in an intensive training
7 program which has been approved by the Board or its designee shall not be considered non-
8 practice and does not relieve Respondent from complying with all the terms and conditions of
9 probation. Practicing medicine in another state of the United States or Federal jurisdiction while
10 on probation with the medical licensing authority of that state or jurisdiction shall not be
11 considered non-practice. A Board-ordered suspension of practice shall not be considered as a
12 period of non-practice.

13 In the event Respondent's period of non-practice while on probation exceeds 18 calendar
14 months, Respondent shall successfully complete the Federation of State Medical Board's Special
15 Purpose Examination, or, at the Board's discretion, a clinical competence assessment program
16 that meets the criteria of Condition 18 of the current version of the Board's "Manual of Model
17 Disciplinary Orders and Disciplinary Guidelines" prior to resuming the practice of medicine.

18 Respondent's period of non-practice while on probation shall not exceed two (2) years.

19 Periods of non-practice will not apply to the reduction of the probationary term.

20 Periods of non-practice for a Respondent residing outside of California will relieve
21 Respondent of the responsibility to comply with the probationary terms and conditions with the
22 exception of this condition and the following terms and conditions of probation: Obey All Laws;
23 General Probation Requirements; Quarterly Declarations; Abstain from the Use of Alcohol and/or
24 Controlled Substances; and Biological Fluid Testing.

25 12. COMPLETION OF PROBATION. Respondent shall comply with all financial
26 obligations (e.g., restitution, probation costs) not later than 120 calendar days prior to the
27 completion of probation. Upon successful completion of probation, Respondent's certificate shall
28 be fully restored.

1 13. VIOLATION OF PROBATION. Failure to fully comply with any term or condition
2 of probation is a violation of probation. If Respondent violates probation in any respect, the
3 Board, after giving Respondent notice and the opportunity to be heard, may revoke probation and
4 carry out the disciplinary order that was stayed. If an Accusation, or Petition to Revoke Probation,
5 or an Interim Suspension Order is filed against Respondent during probation, the Board shall have
6 continuing jurisdiction until the matter is final, and the period of probation shall be extended until
7 the matter is final.

8 14. LICENSE SURRENDER. Following the effective date of this Decision, if
9 Respondent ceases practicing due to retirement or health reasons or is otherwise unable to satisfy
10 the terms and conditions of probation, Respondent may request to surrender his or her license.
11 The Board reserves the right to evaluate Respondent's request and to exercise its discretion in
12 determining whether or not to grant the request, or to take any other action deemed appropriate
13 and reasonable under the circumstances. Upon formal acceptance of the surrender, Respondent
14 shall within 15 calendar days deliver Respondent's wallet and wall certificate to the Board or its
15 designee and Respondent shall no longer practice medicine. Respondent will no longer be subject
16 to the terms and conditions of probation. If Respondent re-applies for a medical license, the
17 application shall be treated as a petition for reinstatement of a revoked certificate.

18 15. PROBATION MONITORING COSTS. Respondent shall pay the costs associated
19 with probation monitoring each and every year of probation, as designated by the Board, which
20 may be adjusted on an annual basis. Such costs shall be payable to the Medical Board of
21 California and delivered to the Board or its designee no later than January 31 of each calendar
22 year.

23 16. FUTURE ADMISSIONS CLAUSE. If Respondent should ever apply or reapply for
24 a new license or certification, or petition for reinstatement of a license, by any other health care
25 licensing action agency in the State of California, all of the charges and allegations contained in
26 Accusation No. 800-2019-052569 shall be deemed to be true, correct, and admitted by
27 Respondent for the purpose of any Statement of Issues or any other proceeding seeking to deny or
28 restrict license.

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ACCEPTANCE

I have carefully read the Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order. 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: 6/30/21



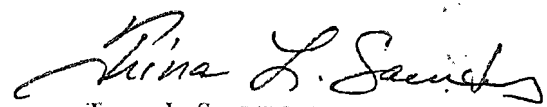
RICHARD EUGENE HILTNER, M.D.
Respondent

ENDORSEMENT

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

DATED: 7/7/21

Respectfully submitted,
MATTHEW RODRIQUEZ
Acting Attorney General of California
E. A. JONES III
Supervising Deputy Attorney General


TRINA L. SAUNDERS
Deputy Attorney General
Attorneys for Complainant

LA2020602412
Hiltner MD Final Stipulation.docx

Exhibit A

Accusation No. 800-2019-052569

1 XAVIER BECERRA
Attorney General of California
2 E. A. JONES III
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9 **BEFORE THE**
MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
10 **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
11 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

12 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2019-052569

13 Richard Eugene Hiltner, M.D.
14 169 East El Roblar
Ojai, CA 93023

A C C U S A T I O N

15 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
16 No. G 23982,

17 Respondent.

18
19
20 **PARTIES**

21 1. William Prasifka (Complainant) brings this Accusation solely in his official capacity
22 as the Executive Director of the Medical Board of California, Department of Consumer Affairs
23 (Board).

24 2. On or about January 26, 1973, the Medical Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's
25 Certificate Number G 23982 to Richard Eugene Hiltner, M.D. (Respondent). The Physician's and
26 Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought
27 herein and will expire on October 31, 2022, unless renewed.

28 ///

JURISDICTION

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

4. Section 2227 of the Code states:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Section 2234 of the Code, states:

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.

(b) Gross negligence.

(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.

(1) An initial negligent diagnosis followed by an act or omission medically

1 appropriate for that negligent diagnosis of the patient shall constitute a single
2 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,
5 but not limited to, a reevaluation of the diagnosis or a change in treatment, and
6 the licensee's conduct departs from the applicable standard of care, each
7 departure constitutes a separate and distinct breach of the standard of care.

8 (d) Incompetence.

9 (e) The commission of any act involving dishonesty or corruption that is
10 substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a physician and
11 surgeon.

12 (f) Any action or conduct that would have warranted the denial of a certificate.

13 (g) The failure by a certificate holder, in the absence of good cause, to attend
14 and participate in an interview by the board. This subdivision shall only apply to a
15 certificate holder who is the subject of an investigation by the board.

16 6. Section 2266 of the Code states: "The failure of a physician and surgeon to maintain
17 adequate and accurate records relating to the provision of services to their patients constitutes
18 unprofessional conduct."

19 FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

20 (Gross Negligence)

21 7. Respondent Richard Eugene Hiltner, M.D. is subject to disciplinary action under
22 Code section 2234, subdivision (b), in that he was grossly negligent in his care and treatment of
23 Patient A., a minor, who he only saw on one office visit.¹ The circumstances are as follows:

24 8. On November 26, 2018, four-month-old Patient A presented to Respondent for her
25 first and only visit with him. She was brought in by her mother. The purpose of the visit is not
26 clearly delineated in the medical record. Patient A had an established primary care physician.
27 During the visit, Respondent provided a permanent medical exemption for all school-required
28 immunizations recorded on the American Academy of Pediatrics/California Academy of Family
Physicians form. The sole reason stated on the form for issuing this broad exemption is, "Family
history of autoimmune . . . [illegible] . . . and severe vaccine reactions."

¹ The letter A has been used in place of the patient's name to protect the patient's privacy
in his/her medical information.

1 9. The medical record maintained by Respondent contains multiple illegible entries,
2 making it impossible to determine to what degree Respondent documented Patient A's family
3 history. It is equally impossible to determine if Respondent made any diagnosis that would
4 qualify as a recognized exemption from particular school-required immunizations.

5 10. The medical records maintained by Respondent do not document any conversations
6 with Patient A's father.

7 11. Patient A's records maintained by her primary doctor do not contain documentation
8 of any diagnosis that would contraindicate immunization.

9 12. On June 26, 2020, Respondent participated in a Board interview that was conducted
10 by an investigator of the Health Quality Investigation Unit. During the interview, Respondent
11 stated that the only reason for issuing the exemption was a family history of autoimmune diseases
12 and a family history of allergic reactions. He stated that he was not aware of, nor did he make
13 any diagnosis of Patient A on which he based his immunization exemption. Respondent stated
14 that he was not aware of any condition Patient A had, or prior diagnosis made of her, upon which
15 he based his decision to issue an immunization exemption.

16 13. During his interview Respondent expressed a preference for homeopathic
17 "immunization," to standard immunization. However, he also demonstrated a lack of basic
18 knowledge about the risks of vaccine preventable diseases and the vaccines available to prevent
19 them. Respondent acknowledged that he does not know how well homeopathic immunizations
20 prevent disease.

21 14. The standard of care requires that a physician evaluate a patient for possible reactions
22 to vaccine, obtain a detailed history of the vaccines previously received, as well as the patient's
23 reaction/reactions that occurred. A medical exemption must be based on a patient's medical
24 condition that might lead a vaccine to cause harm. These conditions are listed by the Centers for
25 Disease Control as contraindications or precautions for vaccination and are endorsed by the
26 American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians.

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3. Ordering Richard Eugene Hiltner, M.D., if placed on probation, to pay the Board the costs of probation monitoring; and

4. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.

DATED: Nov. 19, 2020



WILLIAM PRASIFKA
Executive Director
Medical Board of California
Department of Consumer Affairs
State of California
Complainant

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Accusation - Medical Board With Client's Requested changes (002).docx