

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

In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Stephen Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D.

Physician's and Surgeon's
Certificate No. G 76433

Respondent.

Case No. 800-2017-037145

DECISION

The attached Stipulated Surrender of License and 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 January 14, 2022.

IT IS SO ORDERED January 7, 2022.

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA



William Prasifka
Executive Director

1 ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
2 ROBERT BELL
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
3 VLADIMIR SHALKEVICH
Deputy Attorney General
4 State Bar No. 173955
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Attorneys for Complainant
7

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

12 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2017-037145

13 **STEPHEN KYO-SUNG KIM, M.D.**
1125 South Beverly Dr, Suite 111
14 Los Angeles, CA 90035-1148

**STIPULATED SURRENDER OF
LICENSE AND ORDER**

15 **Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate**
No. G 76433

16 Respondent.

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

19 **PARTIES**

20 1. William Prasifka (Complainant) is the Executive Director of the Medical Board of
21 California (Board). He brought this action solely in his official capacity and is represented in this
22 matter by Rob Bonta, Attorney General of the State of California, by Vladimir Shalkevich,
23 Deputy Attorney General.

24 2. STEPHEN KYO-SUNG KIM, M.D. (Respondent) is representing himself in this
25 proceeding and has chosen not to exercise his right to be represented by counsel.

26 3. On or about May 3, 1993, the Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No.
27 G 76433 to STEPHEN KYO-SUNG KIM, M.D. (Respondent). The Physician's and Surgeon's
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1 Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought in Accusation
2 No. 800-2017-037145. It expired on February 28, 2019, and has not been renewed.

3 **JURISDICTION**

4 4. Accusation No. 800-2017-037145 was filed before the Board, and is currently
5 pending against Respondent. The Accusation and all other statutorily required documents
6 were properly served on Respondent on December 14, 2021 and in person on December 27,
7 2021. A copy of Accusation No. 800-2017-037145 is attached as Exhibit A and incorporated
8 by reference. Respondent did not submit a Notice of Defense.

9 **ADVISEMENT AND WAIVERS**

10 5. Respondent has carefully read, and understands the charges and allegations in
11 Accusation No. 800-2017-037145. Respondent also has carefully read, and understands the
12 effects of this Stipulated Surrender of License and Order.

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

20 7. Respondent voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently waives and gives up each and
21 every right set forth above.

22 **CULPABILITY**

23 8. Respondent admits all of the charges and allegations in the Accusation No. 800-2017-
24 037145, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A and is incorporated herein by reference.

25 9. Respondent understands that by signing this stipulation he enables the Board to issue
26 an order accepting the surrender of his Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate without further
27 process.

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1 CONTINGENCY

2 10. This stipulation shall be subject to approval by the Board. Respondent understands
3 and agrees that counsel for Complainant and the staff of the Board may communicate directly
4 with the Board regarding this stipulation and surrender, without notice to or participation by
5 Respondent. By signing the stipulation, Respondent understands and agrees that he may not
6 withdraw his agreement or seek to rescind the stipulation prior to the time the Board considers
7 and acts upon it. If the Board fails to adopt this stipulation as its Decision and Order, the
8 Stipulated Surrender and Disciplinary Order shall be of no force or effect, except for this
9 paragraph, it shall be inadmissible in any legal action between the parties, and the Board shall not
10 be disqualified from further action by having considered this matter.

11 11. The parties understand and agree that Portable Document Format (PDF) and facsimile
12 copies of this Stipulated Surrender of License and Order, including PDF and facsimile signatures
13 thereto, shall have the same force and effect as the originals.

14 12. In consideration of the foregoing admissions and stipulations, the parties agree that
15 the Board may, without further notice or formal proceeding, issue and enter the following Order:

16 ORDER

17 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. G 76433, issued
18 to Respondent STEPHEN KYO-SUNG KIM, M.D., is surrendered and accepted by the Board.

19 1. The surrender of Respondent's Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate and the
20 acceptance of the surrendered license by the Board shall constitute the imposition of discipline
21 against Respondent. This stipulation constitutes a record of the discipline and shall become a part
22 of Respondent's license history with the Board.

23 2. Respondent shall lose all rights and privileges as a Physician and Surgeon in
24 California as of the effective date of the Board's Decision and Order.

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ENDORSEMENT

The foregoing Stipulated Surrender of License and Order is hereby respectfully submitted for consideration by the Medical Board of California of the Department of Consumer Affairs.

DATED: December 28, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
ROBERT BELL
Supervising Deputy Attorney General



VLADIMIR SHALKEVICH
Deputy Attorney General
Attorneys for Complainant

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Exhibit A

Accusation No. 800-2017-037145

1 ROB BONTA
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2 ROBERT BELL
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9 **BEFORE THE**
10 **MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA**
11 **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
12 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

12 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2017-037145

13 STEPHEN KYO-SUNG KIM, M.D.

A C C U S A T I O N

14 1125 South Beverly Drive, Suite 111
15 Los Angeles, CA 90035

16 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate G 76433,
17 Respondent.

18
19 **PARTIES**

20 1. William Prasifka (Complainant) brings this Accusation solely in his official capacity
21 as the Executive Director of the Medical Board of California (Board).

22 2. On May 3, 1993, the Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate Number G
23 76433 to Stephen Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D. (Respondent). That license was in full force and effect at
24 all times relevant to the charges brought herein. On January 22, 2018, Respondent's Physician's
25 and Surgeon's Certificate was suspended by an Interim Suspension Order. Respondent's
26 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate expired on February 28, 2019, and has not been 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.

(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 (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
3 act.

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

9 (d) Incompetence.

10 (e) The commission of any act involving dishonesty or corruption that is substantially
11 related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a physician and 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 and
14 participate in an interview by the board. This subdivision shall only apply to a certificate
15 holder who is the subject of an investigation by the board.

16 6. Section 2236 of the Code states:

17 (a) The conviction of any offense substantially related to the qualifications,
18 functions, or duties of a physician and surgeon constitutes unprofessional conduct
19 within the meaning of this chapter [Chapter 5, the Medical Practice Act]. The record
20 of conviction shall be conclusive evidence only of the fact that the conviction
21 occurred.

22 (b) The district attorney, city attorney, or other prosecuting agency shall notify
23 the Medical Board of the pendency of an action against a licensee charging a felony
24 or misdemeanor immediately upon obtaining information that the defendant is a
25 licensee. The notice shall identify the licensee and describe the crimes charged and
26 the facts alleged. The prosecuting agency shall also notify the clerk of the court in
27 which the action is pending that the defendant is a licensee, and the clerk shall record
28 prominently in the file that the defendant holds a license as a physician and surgeon.

(c) The clerk of the court in which a licensee is convicted of a crime shall,
within 48 hours after the conviction, transmit a certified copy of the record of
conviction to the board. The division may inquire into the circumstances surrounding
the commission of a crime in order to fix the degree of discipline or to determine if
the conviction is of an offense substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or
duties of a physician and surgeon.

(d) A plea or verdict of guilty or a conviction after a plea of nolo contendere is
deemed to be a conviction within the meaning of this section and Section 2236.1.
The record of conviction shall be conclusive evidence of the fact that the conviction
occurred.

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1 11. Respondent performed a preoperative assessment and documented that despite the
2 patient having consented only to a local anesthetic with IV sedation, the patient would be
3 subjected to general anesthesia during the procedure. The patient was subsequently intubated and
4 had a laryngeal mask airway (LMA) placed for the operation. According to the anesthesia record,
5 Respondent administered 4 mg of midazolam to the patient following induction of anesthesia.

6 12. At the time, and unbeknownst to the patient, Respondent had a serious ongoing drug
7 abuse problem. He had been using narcotics that had been stolen from various surgical centers
8 prior to and during surgeries for two to three years before he cared for Patient 1. On the day of
9 Patient 1's surgery, Respondent injected himself with 50 milligrams of Demerol² stolen from the
10 surgical center after he arrived at the facility. Respondent was under the influence of controlled
11 substance when he administered unconsented general anesthesia to Patient 1.

12 13. Respondent left the operating room during the surgery to inject himself with an
13 additional 50 milligrams of Demerol and 60 milligrams of Toradol³ and he fell and struck his
14 head when he returned to the operating room. He told other healthcare providers in the operating
15 room that he was fine and able to continue. The operation took approximately five hours and was
16 performed by a surgeon without reported complications.

17 14. After the surgery the patient was returned to a post anesthesia care unit, where
18 Respondent and nurses were responsible for his recovery and emergence from anesthesia. Upon
19 arrival in the recovery room the patient was somnolent and unarousable. In addition, the patient
20 was mildly bradycardic, suffering from a slow heart rate. Respondent came to evaluate the
21 patient and then returned with two unlabeled syringes. Respondent claimed that they were
22 glycopyrrolate and atropine, and he injected them into the patient's intravenous line. Soon after
23 this, the patient began to decompensate and suffered a respiratory arrest, which eventually led to a
24 cardiac arrest. A nurse repeatedly attempted to get Respondent to return to attend to the patient.

25 ² Demerol is an opioid agonist that contains meperidine. It is a dangerous drug pursuant
26 to Business and Professions Code section 4022, and a Schedule II controlled substance pursuant
to Health and Safety Code section 11055, subdivision (c) (17)

27 ³ Toradol (ketorolac tromethamine), is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)
28 that is used to treat moderately severe pain. It is a dangerous drug pursuant to Business and
Professions Code section 4022, and a Schedule IV controlled substance pursuant to the federal
Controlled Substances Act.

1 Eventually, the surgeon arrived and attempted to resuscitate the patient with bag mask ventilation.
2 Respondent arrived and attempted to re-intubate the patient. Respondent was acting in a confused
3 and erratic manner. He did not bring the correct equipment to intubate the patient and struggled
4 in his attempts, out of character for a trained anesthesiologist. This led to an esophageal
5 intubation, when endotracheal tube was mistakenly placed in the patient's esophagus and not in
6 his trachea.

7 15. Paramedics were called and arrived to find the patient in asystole. The paramedics
8 noted the incorrect esophageal intubation. During the resuscitative efforts, Respondent entered
9 the room with a syringe and began to inject an intravenous medication into the patient's IV.
10 Respondent had to be physically pulled away by a paramedic from the Patient's IV. Respondent
11 later acknowledged that the syringe contained Demerol, a completely inappropriate medication
12 for a patient during resuscitative efforts in the circumstances of this case. Resuscitation was
13 unsuccessful and the patient died.

14 16. The police were called to the clinic and their reports, photos and witness interviews
15 demonstrated fresh injection sites on Respondent's arm. Respondent admitted to using Demerol
16 to the police officers. Laboratory values confirmed high levels of Demerol in Respondent's blood
17 stream. Subsequent investigation, which included an inspection of the surgical center's drug log
18 indicated that 1800 mg of Demerol was removed from the surgical center's pharmacy during the
19 procedure, with only 900 mg having been documented as given to the patient.

20 17. Blood and urine samples collected from Respondent indicated that he had a
21 significant amount of Demerol and traces of Fentanyl in his system. Respondent admitted that he
22 had used Demerol about 150 times prior to or during other medical procedures. Respondent was
23 arrested and criminally prosecuted.

24 18. On December 3, 2021, in the case of *People vs. Stephen Kim*, Los Angeles Superior
25 Court Case Number BA464557, Respondent was convicted, upon his plea of guilty, of
26 involuntary manslaughter, in violation of Penal Code section 192, subdivision (b). Respondent
27 was ordered to be confined in the county jail for two years, and his sentencing was postponed
28

1 until December 4, 2023. As a part of the plea agreement, Respondent agreed to surrender his
2 medical license and never practice in the medical field or work in any medical facility.

3 **FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

4 **(Conviction of a Crime)**

5 19. By reasons of the facts set forth in paragraph 10 through 18, Respondent Stephen
6 Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D. is subject to disciplinary action under sections 2236 of the Code in that he
7 was convicted of a felony substantially related to the qualifications, functions and duties of a
8 physician and surgeon.

9 **SECOND CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

10 **(Drug Abuse)**

11 20. By reasons of the facts set forth in paragraph 10 through 18, Respondent Stephen
12 Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D. is subject to disciplinary action under section 2239 of the Code in that he
13 used controlled substances in a manner dangerous to himself and the public.

14 **THIRD CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

15 **(Practicing Medicine While Impaired)**

16 21. By reasons of the facts set forth in paragraph 10 through 18, Respondent Stephen
17 Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D. is subject to disciplinary action under section 2280 of the Code in that he
18 addition, practiced medicine while under the influence of a controlled substance. The
19 circumstances are as follows:

20 **FOURTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

21 **(Gross Negligence)**

22 22. Respondent Stephen Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D. is subject to disciplinary action under
23 sections 2234, subdivision (b) in that he was grossly negligent in the care and treatment of his
24 patient.

25 23. The allegations of paragraphs 10 through 18 are incorporated herein by reference.

26 24. Each of the following was an extreme departure from the applicable standard of care:

27 A) Under the circumstances of this case, giving the patient 900 mg of Demerol was
28 an extreme departure from the standard of care.

1 B) Administering general anesthesia without the patient's consent was an extreme
2 departure from the standard of care.

3 C) Respondent's incorrect esophageal intubation during attempts to re-intubate the
4 patient was an extreme departure from the standard of care for an anesthesiologist.

5 D) Practicing medicine while under the influence of a controlled substance was an
6 extreme departure from the standard of care.

7 **FIFTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

8 (Repeated Negligent Acts)

9 25. Respondent Stephen Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D. is subject to disciplinary action under
10 sections 2234, subdivision (c) in that he committed repeated negligent acts in the care and
11 treatment of his patient.

12 26. The allegations of paragraphs 10 through 18 and paragraph 24 are incorporated herein
13 by reference.

14 27. Each of the following, in addition to the allegations of paragraph 24 was a departure
15 from the applicable standard of care:

16 A) Under the circumstances of this case, giving the patient 4 mg of midazolam was
17 a departure from the standard of care.

18 B) Respondent's attempt to treat Patient 1's delayed emergence from anesthesia
19 was a departure from the standard of care.

20 **PRAYER**

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

23 1. Revoking Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate Number G 76433, issued to Stephen
24 Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D.;

25 2. Revoking, suspending or denying approval of Respondent Stephen Kyo-Sung Kim,
26 M.D.'s authority to supervise physician assistants and advanced practice nurses;

27 3. Ordering Respondent Stephen Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D. to pay to the Board the
28 reasonable costs of the investigation and enforcement of this case incurred after January 1, 2022.

1 4. If placed on probation, ordering Respondent Stephen Kyo-Sung Kim, M.D. to pay the
2 Board the costs of probation monitoring; and

3 5. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.

4
5 DATED: DEC 14 2021



Reji Varghese
Deputy Director

6 For: WILLIAM PRASIFKA
7 Executive Director
8 Medical Board of California
9 Department of Consumer Affairs
10 State of California

Complainant

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