

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

In the Matter of the Accusation
Against:

Joseph Nicholas Mirkovich, Jr., M.D.

Physician's and Surgeon's
Certificate No. A 77930

Respondent.

Case No.: 800-2022-092266

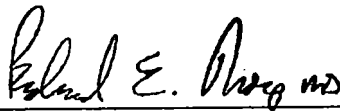
DECISION

The attached Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary 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 July 26, 2024.

IT IS SO ORDERED: June 28, 2024.

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA



Richard E. Thorp, Chair
Panel B

1 ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
2 JUDITH T. ALVARADO
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
3 CATHERINE B. KIM
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7 *Attorneys for Complainant*

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:

13 **JOSEPH NICHOLAS MIRKOVICH, JR.,**
14 **M.D.**
15 **6521 Via Lorenzo**
16 **Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275**

17 **Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate**
18 **No. A 77930,**

19 Respondent.

Case No. 800-2022-092266

OAH No. 2024010462

20 **STIPULATED SETTLEMENT AND**
21 **DISCIPLINARY ORDER**

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

24 **PARTIES**

25 1. Reji Varghese (Complainant) is the Executive Director of the Medical Board of
26 California (Board). He brought this action solely in his official capacity and is represented in this
27 matter by Rob Bonta, Attorney General of the State of California, by Catherine B. Kim, Deputy
28 Attorney General.

2. Respondent Joseph Nicholas Mirkovich, Jr., M.D. (Respondent) is represented in this
proceeding by attorney Adam B. Brown, Esq., whose address is: 3848 W. Carson Street, Suite
206, Torrance, CA 90503.

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1 Decision(s) to the chief of staff, director, office manager, program manager, officer, or the chief
2 executive officer at every community or non-profit organization where Respondent provides
3 community service and shall submit proof of compliance to the Board or its designee within 15
4 calendar days. This condition shall also apply to any change(s) in community service.

5 Community service performed prior to the effective date of the Decision shall not be
6 accepted in fulfillment of this condition.

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

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

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

25 5. PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION. Within 30 calendar days of the effective date of
26 this Decision, and on whatever periodic basis thereafter may be required by the Board or its
27 designee, Respondent shall undergo and complete a psychiatric evaluation (and psychological
28 testing, if deemed necessary) by a Board-appointed board certified psychiatrist, who shall

1 consider any information provided by the Board or designee and any other information the
2 psychiatrist deems relevant, and shall furnish a written evaluation report to the Board or its
3 designee. Psychiatric evaluations conducted prior to the effective date of the Decision shall not
4 be accepted towards the fulfillment of this requirement. Respondent shall pay the cost of all
5 psychiatric evaluations and psychological testing.

6 Respondent shall comply with all restrictions or conditions recommended by the evaluating
7 psychiatrist within 15 calendar days after being notified by the Board or its designee.

8 6. PSYCHOTHERAPY. Within 60 calendar days of the effective date of this Decision,
9 Respondent shall submit to the Board or its designee for prior approval the name and
10 qualifications of a California-licensed board certified psychiatrist or a licensed psychologist who
11 has a doctoral degree in psychology and at least five years of postgraduate experience in the
12 diagnosis and treatment of emotional and mental disorders. Upon approval, Respondent shall
13 undergo and continue psychotherapy treatment, including any modifications to the frequency of
14 psychotherapy, until the Board or its designee deems that no further psychotherapy is necessary.

15 The psychotherapist shall consider any information provided by the Board or its designee
16 and any other information the psychotherapist deems relevant and shall furnish a written
17 evaluation report to the Board or its designee. Respondent shall cooperate in providing the
18 psychotherapist with any information and documents that the psychotherapist may deem
19 pertinent.

20 Respondent shall have the treating psychotherapist submit quarterly status reports to the
21 Board or its designee. The Board or its designee may require Respondent to undergo psychiatric
22 evaluations by a Board-appointed board certified psychiatrist. If, prior to the completion of
23 probation, Respondent is found to be mentally unfit to resume the practice of medicine without
24 restrictions, the Board shall retain continuing jurisdiction over Respondent's license and the
25 period of probation shall be extended until the Board determines that Respondent is mentally fit
26 to resume the practice of medicine without restrictions.

27 Respondent shall pay the cost of all psychotherapy and psychiatric evaluations.

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1 7. NOTICE OF EMPLOYER OR SUPERVISOR INFORMATION. Within seven (7)
2 days of the effective date of this Decision, Respondent shall provide to the Board the names,
3 physical addresses, mailing addresses, and telephone numbers of any and all employers and
4 supervisors. Respondent shall also provide specific, written consent for the Board, Respondent's
5 worksite monitor, and Respondent's employers and supervisors to communicate regarding
6 Respondent's work status, performance, and monitoring.

7 For purposes of this section, "supervisors" shall include the Chief of Staff and Health or
8 Well Being Committee Chair, or equivalent, if applicable, when the Respondent has medical staff
9 privileges.

10 8. BIOLOGICAL FLUID TESTING. Respondent shall immediately submit to
11 biological fluid testing, at Respondent's expense, upon request of the Board or its designee.
12 "Biological fluid testing" may include, but is not limited to, urine, blood, breathalyzer, hair
13 follicle testing, or similar drug screening approved by the Board or its designee. Respondent shall
14 make daily contact with the Board or its designee to determine whether biological fluid testing is
15 required. Respondent shall be tested on the date of the notification as directed by the Board or its
16 designee. The Board may order a Respondent to undergo a biological fluid test on any day, at
17 any time, including weekends and holidays. Except when testing on a specific date as ordered by
18 the Board or its designee, the scheduling of biological fluid testing shall be done on a random
19 basis. The cost of biological fluid testing shall be borne by the Respondent.

20 During the first year of probation, Respondent shall be subject to 52 to 104 random tests.
21 During the second year of probation and for the duration of the probationary term, up to five (5)
22 years, Respondent shall be subject to 36 to 104 random tests per year. Only if there has been no
23 positive biological fluid tests in the previous five (5) consecutive years of probation, may testing
24 be reduced to one (1) time per month. Nothing precludes the Board from increasing the number
25 of random tests to the first-year level of frequency for any reason.

26 Prior to practicing medicine, Respondent shall contract with a laboratory or service,
27 approved in advance by the Board or its designee, that will conduct random, unannounced,
28 observed, biological fluid testing and meets all of the following standards:

- 1 (a) Its specimen collectors are either certified by the Drug and Alcohol Testing Industry
2 Association or have completed the training required to serve as a collector for the United
3 States Department of Transportation.
- 4 (b) Its specimen collectors conform to the current United States Department of
5 Transportation Specimen Collection Guidelines.
- 6 (c) Its testing locations comply with the Urine Specimen Collection Guidelines published
7 by the United States Department of Transportation without regard to the type of test
8 administered.
- 9 (d) Its specimen collectors observe the collection of testing specimens.
- 10 (e) Its laboratories are certified and accredited by the United States Department of Health
11 and Human Services.
- 12 (f) Its testing locations shall submit a specimen to a laboratory within one (1) business day
13 of receipt and all specimens collected shall be handled pursuant to chain of custody
14 procedures. The laboratory shall process and analyze the specimens and provide legally
15 defensible test results to the Board within seven (7) business days of receipt of the
16 specimen. The Board will be notified of non-negative results within one (1) business day
17 and will be notified of negative test results within seven (7) business days.
- 18 (g) Its testing locations possess all the materials, equipment, and technical expertise
19 necessary in order to test Respondent on any day of the week.
- 20 (h) Its testing locations are able to scientifically test for urine, blood, and hair specimens
21 for the detection of alcohol and illegal and controlled substances.
- 22 (i) It maintains testing sites located throughout California.
- 23 (j) It maintains an automated 24-hour toll-free telephone system and/or a secure on-line
24 computer database that allows the Respondent to check in daily for testing.
- 25 (k) It maintains a secure, HIPAA-compliant website or computer system that allows staff
26 access to drug test results and compliance reporting information that is available 24 hours a
27 day.
- 28 (l) It employs or contracts with toxicologists that are licensed physicians and have

1 knowledge of substance abuse disorders and the appropriate medical training to interpret
2 and evaluate laboratory biological fluid test results, medical histories, and any other
3 information relevant to biomedical information.

4 (m) It will not consider a toxicology screen to be negative if a positive result is obtained
5 while practicing, even if the Respondent holds a valid prescription for the substance.

6 Prior to changing testing locations for any reason, including during vacation or other travel,
7 alternative testing locations must be approved by the Board and meet the requirements above.

8 The contract shall require that the laboratory directly notify the Board or its designee of
9 non-negative results within one (1) business day and negative test results within seven (7)
10 business days of the results becoming available. Respondent shall maintain this laboratory or
11 service contract during the period of probation.

12 A certified copy of any laboratory test result may be received in evidence in any
13 proceedings between the Board and Respondent.

14 If a biological fluid test result indicates Respondent has used, consumed, ingested, or
15 administered to himself or herself a prohibited substance, the Board shall order Respondent to
16 cease practice and instruct Respondent to leave any place of work where Respondent is practicing
17 medicine or providing medical services. The Board shall immediately notify all of Respondent's
18 employers, supervisors and work monitors, if any, that Respondent may not practice medicine or
19 provide medical services while the cease-practice order is in effect.

20 A biological fluid test will not be considered negative if a positive result is obtained while
21 practicing, even if the practitioner holds a valid prescription for the substance. If no prohibited
22 substance use exists, the Board shall lift the cease-practice order within one (1) business day.

23 After the issuance of a cease-practice order, the Board shall determine whether the positive
24 biological fluid test is in fact evidence of prohibited substance use by consulting with the
25 specimen collector and the laboratory, communicating with the licensee, his or her treating
26 physician(s), other health care provider, or group facilitator, as applicable.

27 For purposes of this condition, the terms "biological fluid testing" and "testing" mean the
28 acquisition and chemical analysis of a Respondent's urine, blood, breath, or hair.

1 For purposes of this condition, the term “prohibited substance” means an illegal drug, a
2 lawful drug not prescribed or ordered by an appropriately licensed health care provider for use by
3 Respondent and approved by the Board, alcohol, or any other substance the Respondent has been
4 instructed by the Board not to use, consume, ingest, or administer to himself or herself.

5 If the Board confirms that a positive biological fluid test is evidence of use of a prohibited
6 substance, Respondent has committed a major violation, as defined in section 1361.52(a), and the
7 Board shall impose any or all of the consequences set forth in section 1361.52(b), in addition to
8 any other terms or conditions the Board determines are necessary for public protection or to
9 enhance Respondent’s rehabilitation.

10 9. SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS. Within thirty (30) days of
11 the effective date of this Decision, Respondent shall submit to the Board or its designee, for its
12 prior approval, the name of a substance abuse support group which he or she shall attend for the
13 duration of probation. Respondent shall attend substance abuse support group meetings at least
14 once per week, or as ordered by the Board or its designee. Respondent shall pay all substance
15 abuse support group meeting costs.

16 The facilitator of the substance abuse support group meeting shall have a minimum of three
17 (3) years experience in the treatment and rehabilitation of substance abuse, and shall be licensed
18 or certified by the state or nationally certified organizations. The facilitator shall not have a
19 current or former financial, personal, or business relationship with Respondent within the last five
20 (5) years. Respondent’s previous participation in a substance abuse group support meeting led by
21 the same facilitator does not constitute a prohibited current or former financial, personal, or
22 business relationship.

23 The facilitator shall provide a signed document to the Board or its designee showing
24 Respondent’s name, the group name, the date and location of the meeting, Respondent’s
25 attendance, and Respondent’s level of participation and progress. The facilitator shall report any
26 unexcused absence by Respondent from any substance abuse support group meeting to the Board,
27 or its designee, within twenty-four (24) hours of the unexcused absence.

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1 10. WORKSITE MONITOR FOR SUBSTANCE-ABUSING LICENSEE. Within thirty
2 (30) calendar days of the effective date of this Decision, Respondent shall submit to the Board or
3 its designee for prior approval as a worksite monitor, the name and qualifications of one or more
4 licensed physician and surgeon, other licensed health care professional if no physician and
5 surgeon is available, or, as approved by the Board or its designee, a person in a position of
6 authority who is capable of monitoring the Respondent at work.

7 The worksite monitor shall not have a current or former financial, personal, or familial
8 relationship with Respondent, or any other relationship that could reasonably be expected to
9 compromise the ability of the monitor to render impartial and unbiased reports to the Board or its
10 designee. If it is impractical for anyone but Respondent's employer to serve as the worksite
11 monitor, this requirement may be waived by the Board or its designee, however, under no
12 circumstances shall Respondent's worksite monitor be an employee or supervisee of the licensee.

13 The worksite monitor shall have an active unrestricted license with no disciplinary action
14 within the last five (5) years, and shall sign an affirmation that he or she has reviewed the terms
15 and conditions of Respondent's disciplinary order and agrees to monitor Respondent as set forth
16 by the Board or its designee.

17 Respondent shall pay all worksite monitoring costs.

18 The worksite monitor shall have face-to-face contact with Respondent in the work
19 environment on as frequent a basis as determined by the Board or its designee, but not less than
20 once per week; interview other staff in the office regarding Respondent's behavior, if requested
21 by the Board or its designee; and review Respondent's work attendance.

22 The worksite monitor shall verbally report any suspected substance abuse to the Board and
23 Respondent's employer or supervisor within one (1) business day of occurrence. If the suspected
24 substance abuse does not occur during the Board's normal business hours, the verbal report shall
25 be made to the Board or its designee within one (1) hour of the next business day. A written
26 report that includes the date, time, and location of the suspected abuse; Respondent's actions; and
27 any other information deemed important by the worksite monitor shall be submitted to the Board
28 or its designee within 48 hours of the occurrence.

1 The worksite monitor shall complete and submit a written report monthly or as directed by
2 the Board or its designee which shall include the following: (1) Respondent's name and
3 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate number; (2) the worksite monitor's name and signature; (3)
4 the worksite monitor's license number, if applicable; (4) the location or location(s) of the
5 worksite; (5) the dates Respondent had face-to-face contact with the worksite monitor; (6) the
6 names of worksite staff interviewed, if applicable; (7) a report of Respondent's work attendance;
7 (8) any change in Respondent's behavior and/or personal habits; and (9) any indicators that can
8 lead to suspected substance abuse by Respondent. Respondent shall complete any required
9 consent forms and execute agreements with the approved worksite monitor and the Board, or its
10 designee, authorizing the Board, or its designee, and worksite monitor to exchange information.

11 If the worksite monitor resigns or is no longer available, Respondent shall, within five (5)
12 calendar days of such resignation or unavailability, submit to the Board or its designee, for prior
13 approval, the name and qualifications of a replacement monitor who will be assuming that
14 responsibility within fifteen (15) calendar days. If Respondent fails to obtain approval of a
15 replacement monitor within sixty (60) calendar days of the resignation or unavailability of the
16 monitor, Respondent shall receive a notification from the Board or its designee to cease the
17 practice of medicine within three (3) calendar days after being so notified. Respondent shall
18 cease the practice of medicine until a replacement monitor is approved and assumes monitoring
19 responsibility.

20 11. VIOLATION OF PROBATION CONDITION FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSING
21 LICENSEES. Failure to fully comply with any term or condition of probation is a violation of
22 probation.

23 A. If Respondent commits a major violation of probation as defined by section
24 1361.52, subdivision (a), of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations, the Board shall take
25 one or more of the following actions:

26 (1) Issue an immediate cease-practice order and order Respondent to undergo a clinical
27 diagnostic evaluation to be conducted in accordance with section 1361.5, subdivision (c)(1), of
28 Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations, at Respondent's expense. The cease-practice

1 order issued by the Board or its designee shall state that Respondent must test negative for at least
2 a month of continuous biological fluid testing before being allowed to resume practice. For
3 purposes of determining the length of time a Respondent must test negative while undergoing
4 continuous biological fluid testing following issuance of a cease-practice order, a month is
5 defined as thirty calendar (30) days. Respondent may not resume the practice of medicine until
6 notified in writing by the Board or its designee that he or she may do so.

7 (2) Increase the frequency of biological fluid testing.

8 (3) Refer Respondent for further disciplinary action, such as suspension, revocation, or
9 other action as determined by the Board or its designee.

10 B. If Respondent commits a minor violation of probation as defined by section
11 1361.52, subdivision (c), of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations, the Board shall take
12 one or more of the following actions:

13 (1) Issue a cease-practice order;

14 (2) Order practice limitations;

15 (3) Order or increase supervision of Respondent;

16 (4) Order increased documentation;

17 (5) Issue a citation and fine, or a warning letter;

18 (6) Order Respondent to undergo a clinical diagnostic evaluation to be conducted in
19 accordance with section 1361.5, subdivision (c)(1), of Title 16 of the California Code of
20 Regulations, at Respondent's expense;

21 (7) Take any other action as determined by the Board or its designee.

22 C. Nothing in this Decision shall be considered a limitation on the Board's authority
23 to revoke Respondent's probation if he or she has violated any term or condition of probation. If
24 Respondent violates probation in any respect, the Board, after giving Respondent notice and the
25 opportunity to be heard, may revoke probation and carry out the disciplinary order that was
26 stayed. If an Accusation, or Petition to Revoke Probation, or an Interim Suspension Order is filed
27 against Respondent during probation, the Board shall have continuing jurisdiction until the matter
28 is final, and the period of probation shall be extended until the matter is final.

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

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

10 13. SUPERVISION OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND ADVANCED PRACTICE
11 NURSES. During probation, Respondent is prohibited from supervising physician assistants and
12 advanced practice nurses.

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

16 15. INVESTIGATION/ENFORCEMENT COST RECOVERY. Respondent is hereby
17 ordered to reimburse the Board its costs of investigation and enforcement, in the amount of
18 \$17,504.00 (Seventeen thousand five hundred four dollars). Costs shall be payable to the Medical
19 Board of California. Failure to pay such costs shall be considered a violation of probation.

20 Payment must be made in full within 30 calendar days of the effective date of the Order, or
21 by a payment plan approved by the Medical Board of California. Any and all requests for a
22 payment plan shall be submitted in writing by Respondent to the Board. Failure to comply with
23 the payment plan shall be considered a violation of probation.

24 The filing of bankruptcy by Respondent shall not relieve Respondent of the responsibility
25 to repay investigation and enforcement costs.

26 16. QUARTERLY DECLARATIONS. Respondent shall submit quarterly declarations
27 under penalty of perjury on forms provided by the Board, stating whether there has been
28 compliance with all the conditions of probation.

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

3 17. GENERAL PROBATION REQUIREMENTS.

4 Compliance with Probation Unit

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

6 Address Changes

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

12 Place of Practice

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

16 License Renewal

17 Respondent shall maintain a current and renewed California physician's and surgeon's
18 license.

19 Travel or Residence Outside California

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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1 20. COMPLETION OF PROBATION. Respondent shall comply with all financial
2 obligations (e.g., restitution, probation costs) not later than 120 calendar days prior to the
3 completion of probation. This term does not include cost recovery, which is due within 30
4 calendar days of the effective date of the Order, or by a payment plan approved by the Medical
5 Board and timely satisfied. Upon successful completion of probation, Respondent's certificate
6 shall be fully restored.

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

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

24 23. PROBATION MONITORING COSTS. Respondent shall pay the costs associated
25 with probation monitoring each and every year of probation, as designated by the Board, which
26 may be adjusted on an annual basis. Such costs shall be payable to the Medical Board of
27 California and delivered to the Board or its designee no later than January 31 of each calendar
28 year.

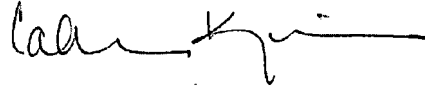
ENDORSEMENT

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

DATED: 5/17/2024

Respectfully submitted,

ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
JUDITH T. ALVARADO
Supervising Deputy Attorney General



CATHERINE B. KIM
Deputy Attorney General
Attorneys for Complainant

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11 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:	Case No. 800-2022-092266
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14 6521 Via Lorenzo	
15 Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275	
16 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate	
17 No. A 77930,	
18 Respondent.	

18 **PARTIES**

- 19 1. Reji Varghese (Complainant) brings this Accusation solely in his official capacity as
20 the Executive Director of the Medical Board of California, Department of Consumer Affairs
21 (Board).
- 22 2. On or about February 8, 2002, the Medical Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's
23 Certificate Number A 77930 to Joseph Nicholas Mirkovich, Jr., M.D. (Respondent). The
24 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the
25 charges brought herein and will expire on March 31, 2025, 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 2004 of the Code states:

6 The board shall have the responsibility for the following:

7 (a) The enforcement of the disciplinary and criminal provisions of the Medical
8 Practice Act.

9 (b) The administration and hearing of disciplinary actions.

10 (c) Carrying out disciplinary actions appropriate to findings made by a panel or
an administrative law judge.

11 (d) Suspending, revoking, or otherwise limiting certificates after the conclusion
12 of disciplinary actions.

13 (e) Reviewing the quality of medical practice carried out by physician and
surgeon certificate holders under the jurisdiction of the board.

14 (f) Approving undergraduate and graduate medical education programs.

15 (g) Approving clinical clerkship and special programs and hospitals for the
16 programs in subdivision (f).

17 (h) Issuing licenses and certificates under the board's jurisdiction.

18 (i) Administering the board's continuing medical education program.

19 5. Section 2220 of the Code states:

20 Except as otherwise provided by law, the board may take action against all
21 persons guilty of violating this chapter. The board shall enforce and administer this
22 article as to physician and surgeon certificate holders, including those who hold
23 certificates that do not permit them to practice medicine, such as, but not limited to,
retired, inactive, or disabled status certificate holders, and the board shall have all the
powers granted in this chapter for these purposes including, but not limited to:

24 (a) Investigating complaints from the public, from other licensees, from health
25 care facilities, or from the board that a physician and surgeon may be guilty of
unprofessional conduct. The board shall investigate the circumstances underlying a
26 report received pursuant to Section 805 or 805.01 within 30 days to determine if an
interim suspension order or temporary restraining order should be issued. The board
27 shall otherwise provide timely disposition of the reports received pursuant to Section
805 and Section 805.01.

28 (b) Investigating the circumstances of practice of any physician and surgeon
where there have been any judgments, settlements, or arbitration awards requiring the

1 physician and surgeon or his or her professional liability insurer to pay an amount in
2 damages in excess of a cumulative total of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) with
respect to any claim that injury or damage was proximately caused by the physician's
and surgeon's error, negligence, or omission.

3 (c) Investigating the nature and causes of injuries from cases which shall be
4 reported of a high number of judgments, settlements, or arbitration awards against a
physician and surgeon.

5 6. 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
Code, or whose default has been entered, and who is found guilty, or who has entered
8 into a stipulation for disciplinary action with the board, may, in accordance with the
provisions of this chapter:

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

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

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

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

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

17 (b) Any matter heard pursuant to subdivision (a), except for warning letters,
18 medical review or advisory conferences, professional competency examinations,
continuing education activities, and cost reimbursement associated therewith that are
19 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.

20 STATUTORY PROVISIONS

21 7. Section 2234 of the Code, states:

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

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

26 (b) Gross negligence.

27 (c) Repeated negligent acts. To be repeated, there must be two or more
28 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
3 negligent 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
6 not limited to, a reevaluation of the diagnosis or a change in treatment, and the
7 licensee's conduct departs from the applicable standard of care, each departure
8 constitutes a separate and distinct breach of the standard of care.

9 (d) Incompetence.

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

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

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

17 8. Section 2236 of the Code states:

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

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

9. Section 2239 of the Code states:

(a) The use or prescribing for or administering to himself or herself, of any
controlled substance; or the use of any of the dangerous drugs specified in Section
4022, or of alcoholic beverages, to the extent, or in such a manner as to be dangerous

1 or injurious to the licensee, or to any other person or to the public, or to the extent that
2 such use impairs the ability of the licensee to practice medicine safely or more than
3 one misdemeanor or any felony involving the use, consumption, or
4 self-administration of any of the substances referred to in this section, or any
5 combination thereof, constitutes unprofessional conduct. The record of the
6 conviction is conclusive evidence of such unprofessional conduct.

7 (b) A plea or verdict of guilty or a conviction following a plea of nolo
8 contendere is deemed to be a conviction within the meaning of this section. The
9 Medical Board may order discipline of the licensee in accordance with Section 2227
10 or the Medical Board may order the denial of the license when the time for appeal has
11 elapsed or the judgment of conviction has been affirmed on appeal or when an order
12 granting probation is made suspending imposition of sentence, irrespective of a
13 subsequent order under the provisions of Section 1203.4 of the Penal Code allowing
14 such person to withdraw his or her plea of guilty and to enter a plea of not guilty, or
15 setting aside the verdict of guilty, or dismissing the accusation, complaint,
16 information, or indictment.

17 10. Section 490 of the Code states:

18 (a) In addition to any other action that a board is permitted to take against a
19 licensee, a board may suspend or revoke a license on the ground that the licensee has
20 been convicted of a crime, if the crime is substantially related to the qualifications,
21 functions, or duties of the business or profession for which the license was issued.

22 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a board may exercise any
23 authority to discipline a licensee for conviction of a crime that is independent of the
24 authority granted under subdivision (a) only if the crime is substantially related to the
25 qualifications, functions, or duties of the business or profession for which the
26 licensee's license was issued.

27 (c) A conviction within the meaning of this section means a plea or verdict of
28 guilty or a conviction following a plea of nolo contendere. Any action that a board is
permitted to take following the establishment of a conviction may be taken when the
time for appeal has elapsed, or the judgment of conviction has been affirmed on
appeal, or when an order granting probation is made suspending the imposition of
sentence, irrespective of a subsequent order under the provisions of Section 1203.4 of
the Penal Code.

(d) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that the application of this section
has been made unclear by the holding in *Petropoulos v. Department of Real Estate*
(2006) 142 Cal.App.4th 554, and that the holding in that case has placed a significant
number of statutes and regulations in question, resulting in potential harm to the
consumers of California from licensees who have been convicted of crimes.
Therefore, the Legislature finds and declares that this section establishes an
independent basis for a board to impose discipline upon a licensee, and that the
amendments to this section made by Chapter 33 of the Statutes of 2008 do not
constitute a change to, but rather are declaratory of, existing law.

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1 REGULATORY PROVISIONS

2 11. California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 1360, states:

3 (a) For the purposes of denial, suspension or revocation of a license pursuant to
4 Section 141 or Division 1.5 (commencing with Section 475) of the code, a crime,
5 professional misconduct, or act shall be considered to be substantially related to the
6 qualifications, functions or duties of a person holding a license if to a substantial
7 degree it evidences present or potential unfitness of a person holding a license to
8 perform the functions authorized by the license in a manner consistent with the public
9 health, safety or welfare. Such crimes, professional misconduct, or acts shall include
10 but not be limited to the following: Violating or attempting to violate, directly or
11 indirectly, or assisting in or abetting the violation of, or conspiring to violate any
12 provision of state or federal law governing the applicant's or licensee's professional
13 practice.

14 (b) In making the substantial relationship determination required under
15 subdivision (a) for a crime, the board shall consider the following criteria:

- 16 (1) The nature and gravity of the crime;
17 (2) The number of years elapsed since the date of the crime; and
18 (3) The nature and duties of the profession.

19 COST RECOVERY

20 12. Section 125.3 of the Code states:

21 (a) Except as otherwise provided by law, in any order issued in resolution of a
22 disciplinary proceeding before any board within the department or before the
23 Osteopathic Medical Board, upon request of the entity bringing the proceeding, the
24 administrative law judge may direct a licensee found to have committed a violation or
25 violations of the licensing act to pay a sum not to exceed the reasonable costs of the
26 investigation and enforcement of the case.

27 (b) In the case of a disciplined licensee that is a corporation or a partnership, the
28 order may be made against the licensed corporate entity or licensed partnership.

(c) A certified copy of the actual costs, or a good faith estimate of costs where
actual costs are not available, signed by the entity bringing the proceeding or its
designated representative shall be prima facie evidence of reasonable costs of
investigation and prosecution of the case. The costs shall include the amount of
investigative and enforcement costs up to the date of the hearing, including, but not
limited to, charges imposed by the Attorney General.

(d) The administrative law judge shall make a proposed finding of the amount
of reasonable costs of investigation and prosecution of the case when requested
pursuant to subdivision (a). The finding of the administrative law judge with regard
to costs shall not be reviewable by the board to increase the cost award. The board
may reduce or eliminate the cost award, or remand to the administrative law judge if
the proposed decision fails to make a finding on costs requested pursuant to
subdivision (a).

1 (e) If an order for recovery of costs is made and timely payment is not made as
2 directed in the board's decision, the board may enforce the order for repayment in any
3 appropriate court. This right of enforcement shall be in addition to any other rights
4 the board may have as to any licensee to pay costs.

5 (f) In any action for recovery of costs, proof of the board's decision shall be
6 conclusive proof of the validity of the order of payment and the terms for payment.

7 (g) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the board shall not renew or
8 reinstate the license of any licensee who has failed to pay all of the costs ordered
9 under this section.

10 (2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the board may, in its discretion,
11 conditionally renew or reinstate for a maximum of one year the license of any
12 licensee who demonstrates financial hardship and who enters into a formal agreement
13 with the board to reimburse the board within that one-year period for the unpaid
14 costs.

15 (h) All costs recovered under this section shall be considered a reimbursement
16 for costs incurred and shall be deposited in the fund of the board recovering the costs
17 to be available upon appropriation by the Legislature.

18 (i) Nothing in this section shall preclude a board from including the recovery of
19 the costs of investigation and enforcement of a case in any stipulated settlement.

20 (j) This section does not apply to any board if a specific statutory provision in
21 that board's licensing act provides for recovery of costs in an administrative
22 disciplinary proceeding.

23 FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

24 13. On or about October 1, 2022, at approximately 11:00 p.m., California Highway Patrol
25 (hereinafter "CHP") officers were dispatched after receiving a witness notification of a possible
26 impaired driver in a white Porsche Cayenne (CA License No. 7NXJ839). The witness reported
27 first seeing the Porsche on northbound I-710 freeway veering from lane 3 and partially into lane
28 2, and come to an almost complete stop while transitioning onto eastbound SR-91 even though
there were no vehicles in front of him. The witness also observed the Porsche on the SR-91
driving in such a manner as to cause other vehicles to move out of the way or to apply their
brakes to avoid a collision. The witness then observed the Porsche exit the freeway at Beach
Boulevard, turn left and veer to the right almost crashing into another vehicle.

14. The responding CHP officers located the Porsche Cayenne at or about 11:10 p.m.
driving northbound on Beach Boulevard. The officers observed the Porsche weave in and out of
lane 2 and also observed both left tires straddle the solid double yellow lines between northbound
and southbound lanes.

1 15. The officers conducted an enforcement stop and made contact with Respondent who
2 was driving the Porsche Cayenne. During the course of interviewing the Respondent, officers
3 observed red and watery eyes and detected a strong odor of alcoholic beverage emitting from the
4 vehicle. After exiting the Porsche, Respondent exhibited unsteady gait while walking to the
5 sidewalk and admitted to consuming beer earlier.

6 16. Respondent failed to successfully complete the standard field sobriety tests
7 administered by police officers on scene, who concluded that Respondent was under the influence
8 of an alcoholic beverage.

9 17. The CHP officers placed Respondent under arrest for violation of Vehicle Code
10 Section 23152(a). Respondent refused voluntary blood or breath tests, requiring a warrant for a
11 blood sample to be issued. The results of the blood test obtained at approximately 2:05 a.m. on
12 October 2, 2022, more than three hours after being observed by the witness, revealed that
13 Respondent had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.29 percent.

14 18. On or about May 11, 2023, a criminal complaint was filed, charging Respondent with
15 two misdemeanor counts for violations of Vehicle Code Sections 23152(a) - driving under the
16 influence (Count 1) and 23152(b) - driving with 0.08 percent or more of alcohol in his blood
17 (Count 2).

18 19. On or about June 23, 2023, in the case entitled *The People of the State of California v.*
19 *Joseph N. Mirkovich, Jr.*, case number 3BL01033, in the Superior Court of California, County of
20 Los Angeles, Respondent was convicted upon his plea of nolo contendere to Count 2 (Vehicle
21 Code Section 23152(b)), a misdemeanor. On or about that same day, the court sentenced
22 Respondent to 3 years' summary probation with terms and conditions, including: successful
23 completion of a nine-month first offender alcohol and drug program; completion of a hospital and
24 morgue (HAM) program, compliance with any DMV order to install an ignition interlock device;
25 a requirement to not drive a motor vehicle with any measurable amount of alcohol in his system;
26 to not drive without a valid driver's license in possession and to not drive without proof of valid
27 auto liability insurance; submission to a blood, breath or urine test at the request of any peace
28 officer; payment of fines, restitution and fees; and a requirement to obey all laws.

1 **FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

2 **(Conviction of a Substantially Related Crime)**

3 20. Respondent Joseph Nicholas Mirkovich, Jr., M.D. is subject to disciplinary action
4 under sections 490 and 2236, subdivision (a), of the Code, and California Code of Regulations,
5 title 16, Section 1360, in that Respondent has been convicted of a crime substantially related to
6 the qualifications, functions or duties of a physician, as more particularly alleged in paragraphs 13
7 through 19, which are incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth.

8 **SECOND CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

9 **(Dangerous Use of Alcohol)**

10 21. Respondent Joseph Nicholas Mirkovich, Jr., M.D. is subject to disciplinary action
11 under section 2239 of the Code in that Respondent consumed alcoholic beverages to the extent, or
12 in such a manner, as to be dangerous and injurious to himself or to the public, as more
13 particularly alleged in paragraphs 13 through 19, which is incorporated herein by reference as if
14 fully set forth.

15 **THIRD CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

16 **(Unprofessional Conduct)**

17 22. Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under section 2234 of the Code in that
18 Respondent has engaged in unprofessional conduct. The circumstances are as follows:

19 23. The allegations of the First and Second Causes for Discipline are incorporated herein
20 by reference as if fully set forth.

21 **PRAYER**

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

24 1. Revoking or suspending Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate Number A 77930,
25 issued to Respondent Joseph Nicholas Mirkovich, Jr., M.D.;

26 2. Revoking, suspending or denying approval of Respondent Joseph Nicholas
27 Mirkovich, Jr., M.D.'s authority to supervise physician assistants and advanced practice nurses;

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3. Ordering Respondent Joseph Nicholas Mirkovich, Jr., M.D., to pay the Board the costs of the investigation and enforcement of this case, and if placed on probation, the costs of probation monitoring; and

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

DATED: NOV 06 2023

JENNA JONES FOR
REJI VARGHESE
Executive Director
Medical Board of California
Department of Consumer Affairs
State of California
Complainant

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