

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

In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Sabina Sonneman, M.D.

**Physician's and Surgeon's
Certificate No. A 38227**

Respondent.

Case No. 800-2019-057833

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 November 8, 2024.

IT IS SO ORDERED November 1, 2024.

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA


**Reji Varghese
Executive Director**

1 ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
2 GREG W. CHAMBERS
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
3 THOMAS OSTLY
Deputy Attorney General
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7 *Attorneys for Complainant*

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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. 800-2019-057833

13 **SABINA SONNEMAN, M.D.**
14 **Center for Living Healthy**
950 Woodside Rd # 6
Redwood City CA 94061

**STIPULATED SURRENDER OF
LICENSE AND ORDER**

15 **Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A**
16 **38227**

17 Respondent.

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

21 **PARTIES**

22 1. Reji Varghese (Complainant) is the Executive Director of the Medical Board of
23 California (Board). He brought this action solely in his official capacity and is represented in this
24 matter by Rob Bonta, Attorney General of the State of California, by Thomas Ostly, Deputy
25 Attorney General.

26 2. SABINA SONNEMAN, M.D. (Respondent) is represented in this proceeding by
27 attorney Raymond J. McMahon, 5440 Trabuco Rd., Irvine, CA 92620.
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3. On or about April 5, 1982, the Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 38227 to SABINA SONNEMAN, M.D. (Respondent). The Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought in Accusation No. 800-2019-057833 and expired on March 31, 2024.

JURISDICTION

4. Accusation No. 800-2019-057833 was filed before the Board, and is currently pending against Respondent. The Accusation and all other statutorily required documents were properly served on Respondent on June 27, 2022. Respondent timely filed her Notice of Defense contesting the Accusation. A copy of Accusation No. 800-2019-057833 is attached as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference.

ADVISEMENT AND WAIVERS

5. Respondent has carefully read, fully discussed with counsel, and understands the charges and allegations in Accusation No. 800-2019-057833. Respondent also has carefully read, fully discussed with counsel, and understands the effects of this Stipulated Surrender of License and Order.

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

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

CULPABILITY

8. Respondent understands and agrees that the charges and allegations in Accusation No. 800-2019-057833, if proven at a hearing, constitute cause for imposing discipline upon her Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate, No. A 38227.

9. For the purpose of resolving the Accusation without the expense and uncertainty of further proceedings, Respondent agrees that, at a hearing, Complainant could establish a factual basis for the charges in the Accusation and that those charges constitute cause for discipline. Respondent hereby gives up her right to contest that cause for discipline exists based on those charges.

10. Respondent understands that by signing this stipulation she enables the Board to issue an order accepting the surrender of her Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate without further process.

CONTINGENCY

11. Business and Professions Code section 2224, subdivision (b), provides, in pertinent part, that the Medical Board “shall delegate to its executive director the authority to adopt a ... stipulation for surrender of a license.”

12. Respondent understands that, by signing this stipulation, she enables the Executive Director of the Board to issue an order, on behalf of the Board, accepting the surrender of her Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 38227 without further notice to, or opportunity to be heard by, Respondent.

13. This Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary Order shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Director on behalf of the Board. The parties agree that this Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary Order shall be submitted to the Executive Director for her consideration in the above-entitled matter and, further, that the Executive Director shall have a reasonable period of time in which to consider and act on this Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary Order after receiving it. By signing this stipulation, Respondent fully understands and agrees that he may not withdraw his agreement or seek to rescind this stipulation prior to the time the Executive Director, on behalf of the Medical Board, considers and acts upon it.

14. The parties agree that this Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary Order shall be null and void and not binding upon the parties unless approved and adopted by the Executive Director on behalf of the Board, except for this paragraph, which shall remain in full force and effect. Respondent fully understands and agrees that in deciding whether or not to

1 approve and adopt this Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary Order, the Executive
2 Director and/or the Board may receive oral and written communications from its staff and/or the
3 Attorney General's Office. Communications pursuant to this paragraph shall not disqualify the
4 Executive Director, the Board, any member thereof, and/or any other person from future
5 participation in this or any other matter affecting or involving respondent. In the event that the
6 Executive Director on behalf of the Board does not, in his discretion, approve and adopt this
7 Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary Order, with the exception of this paragraph, it
8 shall not become effective, shall be of no evidentiary value whatsoever, and shall not be relied
9 upon or introduced in any disciplinary action by either party hereto. Respondent further agrees
10 that should this Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary Order be rejected for any reason
11 by the Executive Director on behalf of the Board, Respondent will assert no claim that the
12 Executive Director, the Board, or any member thereof, was prejudiced by its/his/her review,
13 discussion and/or consideration of this Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary Order or
14 of any matter or matters related hereto.

15 **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS**

16 15. This Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary Order is intended by the parties
17 herein to be an integrated writing representing the complete, final and exclusive embodiment of
18 the agreements of the parties in the above-entitled matter.

19 16. The parties agree that copies of this Stipulated Surrender of License and Disciplinary
20 Order, including copies of the signatures of the parties, may be used in lieu of original documents
21 and signatures and, further, that such copies shall have the same force and effect as originals.

22 15. In consideration of the foregoing admissions and stipulations, the parties agree the
23 Executive Director of the Board may, without further notice to or opportunity to be heard by
24 Respondent, issue and enter the following Disciplinary Order on behalf of the Board:

25 **ORDER**

26 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 38227, issued
27 to Respondent SABINA SONNEMAN, M.D., is surrendered and accepted by the Board.
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1 1. The surrender of Respondent's Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate and the
2 acceptance of the surrendered license by the Board shall constitute the imposition of discipline
3 against Respondent. This stipulation constitutes a record of the discipline and shall become a part
4 of Respondent's license history with the Board.

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

7 3. Respondent shall cause to be delivered to the Board her pocket license and, if one was
8 issued, her wall certificate on or before the effective date of the Decision and Order.

9 4. If Respondent ever files an application for licensure or a petition for reinstatement in
10 the State of California, the Board shall treat it as a petition for reinstatement. Respondent must
11 comply with all the laws, regulations and procedures for reinstatement of a revoked or
12 surrendered license in effect at the time the petition is filed, and all of the charges and allegations
13 contained in Accusation No. 800-2019-057833 shall be deemed to be true, correct and admitted
14 by Respondent when the Board determines whether to grant or deny the petition.

15 5. Respondent shall pay the agency its costs of investigation and enforcement in the
16 amount of \$14,640.25 prior to issuance of a new or reinstated license.

17 6. If Respondent should ever apply or reapply for a new license or certification, or
18 petition for reinstatement of a license, by any other health care licensing agency in the State of
19 California, all of the charges and allegations contained in Accusation, No. 800-2019-057833 shall
20 be deemed to be true, correct, and admitted by Respondent for the purpose of any Statement of
21 Issues or any other proceeding seeking to deny or restrict licensure.

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ACCEPTANCE

I have carefully read the above Stipulated Surrender of License and Order and have fully discussed it with my attorney Raymond J. McMahon, Esq. I understand the stipulation and the effect it will have on my Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate. I enter into this Stipulated Surrender of License and Order voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently, and agree to be bound by the Decision and Order of the Medical Board of California.

DATED: 8/5/24


SABINA SONNEMAN, M.D.
Respondent

I have read and fully discussed with Respondent SABINA SONNEMAN, M.D. the terms and conditions and other matters contained in this Stipulated Surrender of License and Order. I approve its form and content.

DATED: August 5, 2024


RAYMOND J. McMAHON
Attorney for Respondent

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: 10/24/2024

Respectfully submitted,

ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
GREG W. CHAMBERS
Supervising Deputy Attorney General

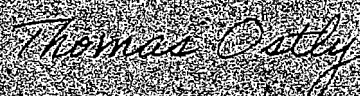

THOMAS OSTLY
Deputy Attorney General
Attorneys for Complainant

Exhibit A

Accusation No. 800-2019-057833

1 ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
2 Steve Diehl
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
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Email: Thomas.Ostly@doj.ca.gov

7 *Attorneys for Complainant*
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9 **BEFORE THE**
10 **MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA**
11 **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
12 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

13 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2019-057833

14 **SABINA SONNEMAN, M.D.**
15 **950 Woodside Road, Suite 6**
Redwood City, CA 94061

A C C U S A T I O N

16 **Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 38227**

17 Respondent.
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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 April 5, 1982, the Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate Number
25 A38227 to Sabina Sonneman, M.D. (Respondent). The Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate was
26 in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on
27 March 31, 2024, 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, in pertinent parts

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

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

...

(c) Repeated negligent acts.

(d) Incompetence.

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1 (b) That the persons required to be immunized be allowed to obtain immunizations from
2 whatever medical source they so desire, subject only to the condition that the immunization be
3 performed in accordance with the regulations of the department and that a record of the
4 immunization is made in accordance with the regulations.

5 (c) Exemptions from immunization for medical reasons.

6 (d) For the keeping of adequate records of immunization so that health departments,
7 schools, and other institutions, parents or guardians, and the persons immunized will be able to
8 ascertain that a child is fully or only partially immunized, and so that appropriate public agencies
9 will be able to ascertain the immunization needs of groups of children in schools or other
10 institutions.

11 (e) Incentives to public health authorities to design innovative and creative programs that
12 will promote and achieve full and timely immunization of children.

13 8. At all relevant times, former Health and Safety Code section 120370 provided, in
14 pertinent part:

15 (a) If the parent or guardian files with the governing authority a written statement by a
16 licensed physician to the effect that the physical condition of the child is such, or medical
17 circumstances relating to the child are such, that immunization is not considered safe, indicating
18 the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstances, including,
19 but not limited to, family medical history, for which the physician does not recommend
20 immunization, that child shall be exempt from the requirements of Chapter 1 (commencing with
21 Section 120325, but excluding Section 120380) and Sections 120400, 120405, 120410, and
22 120415 to the extent indicated by the physician's statement.

23
24 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

25 9 At all relevant times, respondent Sabina Sonneman, M.D., was a physician and
26 surgeon with a specialization in pediatrics and maintained an office practice in Redwood City,
27 California. In 2019, the Board received a complaint that Respondent issued a vaccine exemption
28 that did not appear to be appropriate or valid.

10. At all relevant times, the standard of care for physicians and pediatricians was to follow the guidance on vaccines and vaccine safety provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through the Advisory Council on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), as disseminated in the Red Book.

11. Respondent saw Patient 1¹, a two-and-a-half-year old female child, on a single occasion on August 2, 2016. The child had received no vaccines. Respondent's physical examination of Patient 1 was normal in all documented areas, and Respondent's assessment was that the child was "well" without illness. The family medical history reported by Patient 1's parents included psoriasis and thyroid problems. On the same date, Respondent provided Patient 1 with an exemption from all vaccines based on "family medical history of autoimmune diseases." The exemption was for all vaccines and was permanent. Respondent informed the Board's investigators that she based the vaccine exemption on the parents' report of family history of autoimmune diseases of psoriasis and thyroid problems, and that although the exemption she provided to Patient 1 was permanent she did not intend for it to be permanent.

FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Unprofessional Conduct / Repeated Negligent Acts / Incompetence)

12. Respondent Sabina Sonneman, M.D., is subject to disciplinary action under sections 2234 and/or 2234(c) and/or 2234(d) in that Respondent engaged in unprofessional conduct and/or repeated negligent acts and/or demonstrated incompetence in her care and treatment of Patient 1, including but not limited to:

A. A family history of autoimmune disease, including thyroid problems and psoriasis, is not a recognized contraindication or precaution to any specific vaccine per CDC ACIP and AAP guidelines.

¹ To protect the privacy of the patient involved, the patient's name has not been included in this pleading. Respondent is aware of the identity of the patient referred to herein.

1 B. Respondent issued a vaccine exemption which was global and applied to all vaccines.
2 There is no component common to all childhood vaccines and a valid medical indication that
3 would contraindicate all vaccines is medically improbable.


4 C. Respondent issued a vaccine exemption which was permanent, although she
5 identified no medical condition which would warrant a permanent, or even temporary, exemption.
6

7 **PRAYER**

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

- 10 1. Revoking or suspending Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate Number A 38227,
11 issued to Sabina Sonneman, M.D.;
- 12 2. Revoking, suspending or denying approval of Sabina Sonneman, M.D.'s authority to
13 supervise physician assistants and advanced practice nurses;
- 14 3. Ordering Sabina Sonneman, M.D., to pay the Board the costs of the investigation and
15 prosecution of this case, and if placed on probation, the costs of probation monitoring; and,
- 16 4. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.

17
18 DATED: JUN 29 2022



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