

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

**In the Matter of the Accusation
Against:**

Christopher Brent Romig, M.D.

**Physician's and Surgeon's
Certificate No. A 96968**

Case No.: 800-2021-077785

Respondent.

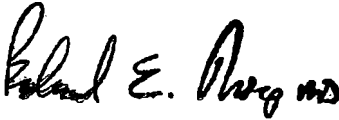
DECISION

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

This Decision shall become effective at 5:00 p.m. on March 28, 2025.

IT IS SO ORDERED: February 27, 2025.

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA



**Richard E. Thorp, M.D., Chair
Panel B**

1 ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
2 MATTHEW M. DAVIS
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
3 LEANNA E. SHIELDS
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8 *Attorneys for Complainant*

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

13 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2021-077785

14 **CHRISTOPHER BRENT ROMIG, M.D.**
15 **15785 Laguna Canyon Road, Suite 125**
Irvine, CA 92618

OAH No. 2024040905

**STIPULATED SETTLEMENT AND
DISCIPLINARY ORDER**

16 **Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate**
17 **No. A 96968,**

Respondent.

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

22 **PARTIES**

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

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1 **CULPABILITY**

2 8. Respondent agrees that, at an administrative hearing, Complainant could establish a
3 *prima facie* case with respect to the charges and allegations contained in Accusation No. 800-
4 2021-077785, and agrees that he has thereby subjected his Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
5 No. A 96968 to discipline.

6 9. Respondent further agrees that if he ever petitions for early termination or
7 modification of probation, or if an accusation and/or petition to revoke probation is filed against
8 him before the Board, all of the charges and allegations contained in Accusation No. 800-2021-
9 077785 shall be deemed true, correct, and fully admitted by Respondent for purposes of any such
10 proceeding.

11 10. Respondent agrees that his Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 96968 is
12 subject to discipline and agrees to be bound by the Board's probationary terms as set forth in the
13 Disciplinary Order below.

14 **CONTINGENCY**

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

25 12. This Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order is intended by the parties herein to
26 be an integrated writing representing the complete, final and exclusive embodiment of the
27 agreement of the parties in this above-entitled matter.

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13. Respondent agrees that if he ever petitions for early termination or modification of probation, or if an accusation and/or petition to revoke probation is filed against him before the Board, all of the charges and allegations contained in Accusation No. 800-2021-077785 shall be deemed true, correct and fully admitted by Respondent for purposes of any such proceeding or any other licensing proceeding involving Respondent in the State of California.

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

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

DISCIPLINARY ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 96968 issued to Respondent Christopher Brent Romig, M.D., is hereby revoked. However, the revocation is stayed, and Respondent is placed on probation for three (3) years on the following terms and conditions:

1. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES - ABSTAIN FROM USE. Respondent shall abstain completely from the personal use or possession of controlled substances as defined in the California Uniform Controlled Substances Act, dangerous drugs as defined by Business and Professions Code section 4022, and any drugs requiring a prescription. This prohibition does not apply to medications lawfully prescribed to Respondent by another practitioner for a bona fide illness or condition.

Within 15 calendar days of receiving any lawfully prescribed medications, Respondent shall notify the Board or its designee of the: issuing practitioner's name, address, and telephone number; medication name, strength, and quantity; and issuing pharmacy name, address, and telephone number.

2. ALCOHOL - ABSTAIN FROM USE. Respondent shall abstain completely from the use of products or beverages containing alcohol.

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

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

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

20 (a) Its specimen collectors are either certified by the Drug and Alcohol Testing Industry
21 Association or have completed the training required to serve as a collector for the United
22 States Department of Transportation.

23 (b) Its specimen collectors conform to the current United States Department of
24 Transportation Specimen Collection Guidelines.

25 (c) Its testing locations comply with the Urine Specimen Collection Guidelines published
26 by the United States Department of Transportation without regard to the type of test
27 administered.

28 (d) Its specimen collectors observe the collection of testing specimens.

1 (e) Its laboratories are certified and accredited by the United States Department of Health
2 and Human Services.

3 (f) Its testing locations shall submit a specimen to a laboratory within one (1) business day
4 of receipt and all specimens collected shall be handled pursuant to chain of custody
5 procedures. The laboratory shall process and analyze the specimens and provide legally
6 defensible test results to the Board within seven (7) business days of receipt of the
7 specimen. The Board will be notified of non-negative results within one (1) business day
8 and will be notified of negative test results within seven (7) business days.

9 (g) Its testing locations possess all the materials, equipment, and technical expertise
10 necessary in order to test Respondent on any day of the week.

11 (h) Its testing locations are able to scientifically test for urine, blood, and hair specimens
12 for the detection of alcohol and illegal and controlled substances.

13 (i) It maintains testing sites located throughout California.

14 (j) It maintains an automated 24-hour toll-free telephone system and/or a secure on-line
15 computer database that allows the Respondent to check in daily for testing.

16 (k) It maintains a secure, HIPAA-compliant website or computer system that allows staff
17 access to drug test results and compliance reporting information that is available 24 hours a
18 day.

19 (l) It employs or contracts with toxicologists that are licensed physicians and have
20 knowledge of substance abuse disorders and the appropriate medical training to interpret
21 and evaluate laboratory biological fluid test results, medical histories, and any other
22 information relevant to biomedical information.

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

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

27 The contract shall require that the laboratory directly notify the Board or its designee of
28 non-negative results within one (1) business day and negative test results within seven (7)

1 business days of the results becoming available. Respondent shall maintain this laboratory or
2 service contract during the period of probation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 The facilitator of the substance abuse support group meeting shall have a minimum of three
8 (3) years' experience in the treatment and rehabilitation of substance abuse and shall be licensed
9 or certified by the state or nationally certified organizations. The facilitator shall not have a
10 current or former financial, personal, or business relationship with Respondent within the last five
11 (5) years. Respondent's previous participation in a substance abuse group support meeting led by
12 the same facilitator does not constitute a prohibited current or former financial, personal, or
13 business relationship.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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1 7. SOLO PRACTICE PROHIBITION. Respondent is prohibited from engaging in the
2 solo practice of medicine. Prohibited solo practice includes, but is not limited to, a practice
3 where: 1) Respondent merely shares office space with another physician but is not affiliated for
4 purposes of providing patient care, or 2) Respondent is the sole physician practitioner at that
5 location.

6 If Respondent fails to establish a practice with another physician or secure employment in
7 an appropriate practice setting within 60 calendar days of the effective date of this Decision,
8 Respondent shall receive a notification from the Board or its designee to cease the practice of
9 medicine within three (3) calendar days after being so notified. The Respondent shall not resume
10 practice until an appropriate practice setting is established.

11 If, during the course of the probation, the Respondent's practice setting changes and the
12 Respondent is no longer practicing in a setting in compliance with this Decision, the Respondent
13 shall notify the Board or its designee within five (5) calendar days of the practice setting change.
14 If Respondent fails to establish a practice with another physician or secure employment in an
15 appropriate practice setting within 60 calendar days of the practice setting change, Respondent
16 shall receive a notification from the Board or its designee to cease the practice of medicine within
17 three (3) calendar days after being so notified. The Respondent shall not resume practice until an
18 appropriate practice setting is established.

19 8. NOTICE OF EMPLOYER OR SUPERVISOR INFORMATION. Within seven (7)
20 days of the effective date of this Decision, Respondent shall provide to the Board the names,
21 physical addresses, mailing addresses, and telephone numbers of any and all employers and
22 supervisors. Respondent shall also provide specific, written consent for the Board, Respondent's
23 worksite monitor, and Respondent's employers and supervisors to communicate regarding
24 Respondent's work status, performance, and monitoring.

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

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1 9. 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 10. OBEY ALL LAWS. Respondent shall obey all federal, state and local laws, all rules
11 governing the practice of medicine in California and remain in full compliance with any court
12 ordered criminal probation, payments, and other orders.

13 11. INVESTIGATION/ENFORCEMENT COST RECOVERY. Respondent is hereby
14 ordered to reimburse the Board its costs of investigation and enforcement, including, but not
15 limited to, expert review, legal reviews, and investigations, as applicable, in the amount of
16 \$39,950.00 (thirty-nine thousand nine hundred and fifty dollars). Costs shall be payable to the
17 Medical Board of California. Failure to pay such costs shall be considered a violation of
18 probation.

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

23 The filing of bankruptcy by Respondent shall not relieve Respondent of the responsibility
24 to repay investigation and enforcement costs, including expert review costs.

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

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

13. GENERAL PROBATION REQUIREMENTS.

Compliance with Probation Unit

Respondent shall comply with the Board's probation unit.

Address Changes

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

Place of Practice

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

License Renewal

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

Travel or Residence Outside California

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

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

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

1 15. 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 Board'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 16. 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 17. 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 Probation,
11 or an Interim Suspension Order is filed against Respondent during probation, the Board shall have
12 continuing jurisdiction until the matter is final, and the period of probation shall be extended until
13 the matter is final.

14 18. 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 19. 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.

20. FUTURE ADMISSIONS CLAUSE. If Respondent should ever apply or reapply for a new license or certification, or petition for reinstatement of a license, by any other health care licensing action agency in the State of California, all of the charges and allegations contained in Accusation No. 800-2021-077785 shall be deemed to be true, correct, and admitted by Respondent for the purpose of any Statement of Issues or any other proceeding seeking to deny or restrict license.

ACCEPTANCE

I have carefully read the above Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order and have fully discussed it with my attorney, Raymond J. McMahon, Esq. I fully understand the stipulation and the effect it will have on my Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A. 96968. I enter into this Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently, and agree to be bound by the Decision and Order of the Medical Board of California.

DATED: October 24, 2024

CHRISTOPHER BRENT ROMIG, M.D.
Respondent

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

DATED: October 24, 2024

RAYMOND J. MCMAHON, ESQ.
Attorney for Respondent

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ENDORSEMENT

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

DATED: Oct. 24, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
MATTHEW M. DAVIS
Supervising Deputy Attorney General


LEANNA E. SHIELDS
Deputy Attorney General
Attorneys for Complainant

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8 *Attorneys for Complainant*

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

13 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2021-077785

14 **CHRISTOPHER BRENT ROMIG, M.D.**
15 **15785 Laguna Canyon Road, Suite 125**
Irvine, CA 92618

A C C U S A T I O N

16 **Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate**
17 **No. A 96968,**

Respondent.

19
20 Complainant alleges:

21 **PARTIES**

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

25 2. On or about August 18, 2006, the Medical Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's
26 Certificate No. A 96968 to Christopher Brent Romig, M.D. (Respondent). The Physician's and
27 Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought
28 herein and will expire on January 31, 2026, unless renewed.

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4. Section 2227 of the Code states:

(1) Have his or her license revoked 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.

(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.

5. Section 2234 of the Code, states, in pertinent part:

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

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

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

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

6 ...

7 6. Section 2238 of the Code states:

8 A violation of any federal statute or federal regulation or any of the statutes or
9 regulations of this state regulating dangerous drugs or controlled substances
constitutes unprofessional conduct.

10 7. Section 2239 of the Code states, in pertinent part:

11 (a) The use or prescribing for or administering to himself or herself, of any
12 controlled substance; or the use of any of the dangerous drugs specified in Section
13 4022, or of alcoholic beverages, to the extent, or in such a manner as to be dangerous
or injurious to the licensee, or to any other person or to the public, or to the extent that
14 such use impairs the ability of the licensee to practice medicine safely or more than
one misdemeanor or any felony involving the use, consumption, or
15 self-administration of any of the substances referred to in this section, or any
combination thereof, constitutes unprofessional conduct. The record of the
conviction is conclusive evidence of such unprofessional conduct.

16 ...

17 8. Section 11170 of the Health and Safety Code states, "No person shall prescribe,
18 administer, or furnish a controlled substance for himself."

19 9. Section 11173 of the Health and Safety Code states, in pertinent part:

20 (a) No person shall obtain or attempt to obtain controlled substances, or
21 procure or attempt to procure the administration of or prescription for controlled
substances, (1) by fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or subterfuge; or (2) by the
22 concealment of a material fact.

23 ...

24 10. Section 2228.1 of the Code states, in pertinent part:

25 (a) On and after July 1, 2019, except as otherwise provided in subdivision (c),
26 the board shall require a licensee to provide a separate disclosure that includes the
licensee's probation status, the length of the probation, the probation end date, all
27 practice restrictions placed on the licensee by the board, the board's telephone
number, and an explanation of how the patient can find further information on the
28 licensee's probation on the licensee's profile page on the board's online license

1 information Internet Web site, to a patient or the patient's guardian or health care
2 surrogate before the patient's first visit following the probationary order while the
3 licensee is on probation pursuant to a probationary order made on and after July 1,
2019, in any of the following circumstances:

4 (1) A final adjudication by the board following an administrative hearing or
5 admitted findings or prima facie showing in a stipulated settlement establishing any
6 of the following:

7 ...

8 (B) Drug or alcohol abuse directly resulting in harm to patients or the extent
9 that such use impairs the ability of the licensee to practice safely.

10 ...

11 (2) An accusation or statement of issues alleged that the licensee committed any
12 of the acts described in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, of paragraph (1), and a
13 stipulated settlement based upon a nolo contendere or other similar compromise that
14 does not include any prima facie showing or admission of guilt or fact but does
15 include an express acknowledgment that the disclosure requirements of this section
16 would serve to protect the public interest.

17 (b) A licensee required to provide a disclosure pursuant to subdivision (a) shall
18 obtain from the patient, or the patient's guardian or health care surrogate, a separate,
19 signed copy of that disclosure.

20 (d) On and after July 1, 2019, the board shall provide the following
21 information, with respect to licensees on probation and licensees practicing under
22 probationary licenses, in plain view on the licensee's profile page on the board's
23 online license information Internet Web site.

24 (1) For probation imposed pursuant to a stipulated settlement, the causes
25 alleged in the operative accusation along with a designation identifying those causes
26 by which the licensee has expressly admitted guilt and a statement that acceptance of
27 the settlement is not an admission of guilt.

28 (2) For probation imposed by an adjudicated decision of the board, the causes
for probation stated in the final probationary order.

(3) For a licensee granted a probationary license, the causes by which the
probationary license was imposed.

(4) The length of the probation and end date.

(5) All practice restrictions placed on the license by the board.

1 **COST RECOVERY**

2 11. Section 125.3 of the Code provides, in pertinent part, that the Board may request the
3 administrative law judge to direct a licensee found to have committed a violation or violations of
4 the licensing act to pay a sum not to exceed the reasonable costs of the investigation and
5 enforcement of the case, with failure of the licensee to comply subjecting the license to not being
6 renewed or reinstated. If a case settles, recovery of investigation and enforcement costs may be
7 included in a stipulated settlement.

8 **FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

9 **(Use and/or Administer a Controlled Substance to Self)**

10 12. Respondent has subjected his Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 96968 to
11 disciplinary action under sections 2227 and 2234, as defined by section 2239, subdivision (a), of
12 the Code, in that Respondent used and/or administered a controlled substance to himself, as more
13 particularly alleged hereinafter.

14 13. According to Respondent, from in or around 2020 through in or around 2021,
15 Respondent regularly removed excessive amounts of Demerol¹ from a hospital medication
16 dispenser (Pyxis) under the guise of patient care, with the intention of retaining the extra amount
17 of Demerol for his own personal use.

18 14. According to Respondent, from in or around 2020 through in or around 2021,
19 Respondent would maintain personal possession of the excess single dose vials of Demerol (25
20 mg/mL) taken from Pyxis and drink the Demerol after work on his way home.

21 15. According to Respondent, he initially mixed the Demerol with juice but over time, he
22 slowly increased the amount of Demerol to 200 mg/mL and mixed Demerol with alcohol to gain
23 his desired effect.

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27 ¹ Demerol is a brand name for meperidine, a Schedule II controlled substance pursuant to Health
28 and Safety Code section 11056, subdivision (c), and a dangerous drug pursuant to Business and
Professions Code section 4022. Demerol is commonly used as a preoperative sedative before anesthesia.

1 **SECOND CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

2 **(Violation of State Laws Regulating Controlled Substances)**

3 16. Respondent has further subjected his Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No.
4 A 96968 to disciplinary action under sections 2227 and 2234, as defined by section 2238, of the
5 Code, in that Respondent violated state laws regulating controlled substances, as more
6 particularly alleged hereinafter.

7 17. Paragraphs 12 through 15, above, are hereby incorporated by reference and realleged
8 as if fully set forth herein.

9 18. Respondent repeatedly obtained Demerol, a controlled substance, by fraud, deceit,
10 misrepresentation, and/or subterfuge, in violation of Health and Safety Code section 11173.

11 19. Respondent repeatedly used and/or administered to himself Demerol, a controlled
12 substance, in violation of section 2239 of the Code, and Health and Safety Code section 11170.

13 **THIRD CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

14 **(Gross Negligence)**

15 20. Respondent has further subjected his Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No.
16 A 96968 to disciplinary action under sections 2227 and 2234, as defined by section 2234,
17 subdivision (b), of the Code, in that Respondent committed gross negligence in his care and
18 treatment of Patients A, B, C, and D,² as more particularly alleged hereinafter.

19 21. Paragraphs 12 through 19, above, are hereby incorporated by reference and realleged
20 as if fully set forth herein.

21 **Patient A**

22 22. On or about March 18, 2021, Patient A, a then 27-year-old male, presented for a
23 colonoscopy in which Respondent was assigned as the anesthesiologist for the procedure.
24 According to records, the procedure lasted approximately 35 minutes. According to the

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26 _____
27 ² Patient identities have been withheld to maintain patient confidentiality. The patients' identities
28 are known to Respondent or will be disclosed to Respondent upon receipt of a duly issued request for
discovery and in accordance with Government Code section 11507.6.

1 anesthesia records for this procedure, in addition to providing other anesthetic medications,
2 Respondent documented providing a total of 250 mg of Demerol to Patient A.

3 23. This documented amount of Demerol supposedly administered to Patient A greatly
4 exceeds the amount necessary for this procedure. In that Respondent admitted to intentionally
5 removing excessive amounts of Demerol for procedures in order to divert the excess Demerol for
6 his own personal consumption, Respondent committed gross negligence in his care and treatment
7 of Patient A in that he failed to accurately document the actual amount of Demerol administered
8 to Patient A and diverted the excess amount of Demerol for his own personal use.

9 **Patient B**

10 24. On or about February 25, 2021, Patient B, a then 84-year-old female, presented for an
11 upper gastrointestinal endoscopy in which Respondent was assigned as the anesthesiologist for
12 the procedure. According to records, the procedure lasted approximately 5 minutes. According
13 to anesthesia records for this procedure, in addition to providing other anesthetic medications,
14 Respondent documented providing a total of 75 mg of Demerol to Patient B.

15 25. This documented amount of Demerol supposedly administered to Patient B greatly
16 exceeds the amount necessary for this procedure. In that Respondent admitted to intentionally
17 removing excessive amounts of Demerol for procedures in order to divert the excess Demerol for
18 his own personal consumption, Respondent committed gross negligence in his care and treatment
19 of Patient B in that he failed to accurately document the actual amount of Demerol administered
20 to Patient B and diverted the excess amount of Demerol for his own personal use.

21 **Patient C**

22 26. On or about February 22, 2021, Patient C, a then 51-year-old female, presented for
23 placement of a ureteral stent in which Respondent was assigned as the anesthesiologist for the
24 procedure. According to records, the procedure lasted approximately 7 minutes. According to
25 anesthesia records for this procedure, in addition to providing other anesthetic medications,
26 Respondent documented providing a total of 150 mg of Demerol to Patient C.

27 27. This documented amount of Demerol supposedly administered to Patient C greatly
28 exceeds the amount necessary for this procedure. In that Respondent admitted to intentionally

1 removing excessive amounts of Demerol for procedures in order to divert the excess Demerol for
2 his own personal consumption, Respondent committed gross negligence in his care and treatment
3 of Patient C in that he failed to accurately document the actual amount of Demerol administered
4 to Patient C and diverted the excess amount of Demerol for his own personal use.

5 **Patient D**

6 28. On or about March 8, 2021, Patient D, a then 58-year-old male, presented for a
7 coronary artery bypass procedure to replace an aortic valve in which Respondent was assigned as
8 the anesthesiologist for the procedure. According to records, the procedure lasted approximately
9 5 hours and 45 minutes. According to anesthesia records for this procedure, in addition to
10 providing other anesthetic medications, Respondent documented providing a total of 500 mg of
11 Demerol to Patient D.

12 29. This documented amount of Demerol supposedly administered to Patient D greatly
13 exceeds the amount necessary for this procedure. In that Respondent admitted to intentionally
14 removing excessive amounts of Demerol for procedures in order to divert the excess Demerol for
15 his own personal consumption, Respondent committed gross negligence in his care and treatment
16 of Patient D in that he failed to accurately document the actual amount of Demerol administered
17 to Patient D and diverted the excess amount of Demerol for his own personal use.

18 **FOURTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

19 **(Repeated Negligent Acts)**

20 30. Respondent has further subjected his Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No.
21 A 96968 to disciplinary action under sections 2227 and 2234, as defined by section 2234,
22 subdivision (c), of the Code, in that Respondent committed repeated negligent acts, in his care
23 and treatment of Patients A, B, C, and D, as more particularly alleged in paragraphs 12 through
24 29, above, which are hereby incorporated by reference and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

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1 PRAYER

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

- 4 1. Revoking or suspending Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. A 96968, issued
5 to Respondent Christopher Brent Romig, M.D.;
- 6 2. Revoking, suspending or denying approval of Respondent Christopher Brent Romig,
7 M.D.'s authority to supervise physician assistants and advanced practice nurses;
- 8 3. Ordering Respondent Christopher Brent Romig, M.D., to pay the Board the costs of
9 the investigation and enforcement of this case, and if placed on probation, the costs of
10 probation monitoring;
- 11 4. Ordering Respondent Christopher Brent Romig, M.D., if placed on probation, to
12 provide patient notification in accordance with Business and Professions Code section
13 2228.1; and
- 14 5. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.

15
16 DATED: MAR 28 2024

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

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