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

In the Matter of the First Amended Accusation Against: Karima Hirani, M.D. Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. G 79715 Respondent.	Case No. 800-2017-038476

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 October 30, 2020.

IT IS SO ORDERED: October 1, 2020.

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

Ronald H. Lewis, M.D., Chair
Panel A

XAVIER BECERRA
Attorney General of California
JUDITH T. ALVARADO
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
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Attorneys for Complainant

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

In the Matter of the First Amended Accusation Against: KARIMA HIRANI, M.D. 9736 Venice Blvd. Culver City, CA 90232 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. G 79715, Respondent.	Case No. 800-2017-038476 OAH No. 2019100484 **STIPULATED SETTLEMENT AND DISCIPLINARY ORDER**

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

PARTIES

1. Christine J. Lally (Complainant) is the Interim Executive Director of the Medical Board of California (Board). She brought this action solely in her official capacity and is represented in this matter by Xavier Becerra, Attorney General of the State of California, by Peggie Bradford Tarwater, Deputy Attorney General.

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2. Respondent Karima Hirani, M.D. (Respondent) is represented in this proceeding by attorney Richard A. Jaffe, whose address is 770 L. Street, Suite 950, Sacramento, California 95814.

3. On August 24, 1994, the Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. G 79715 to 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. 800-2017-038476, and will expire on April 30, 2022, unless renewed.

JURISDICTION

4. First Amended Accusation No. 800-2017-038476 was filed before the Board, and is currently pending against Respondent. The First Amended Accusation and all other statutorily required documents were properly served on Respondent on March 23, 2020. Respondent timely filed her Notice of Defense contesting the Accusation.

5. A copy of First Amended Accusation No. 800-2017-038476 is attached as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference.

ADVISEMENT AND WAIVERS

6. Respondent has carefully read, fully discussed with counsel, and understands the charges and allegations in First Amended Accusation No. 800-2017-038476. Respondent has also carefully read, fully discussed with her counsel, and understands the effects of this Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order.

7. Respondent is fully aware of her legal rights in this matter, including the right to a hearing on the charges and allegations in the First Amended 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.

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

CULPABILITY

9. Respondent understands and agrees that the charges and allegations in First Amended Accusation No. 800-2017-038476, if proven at a hearing, constitute cause for imposing discipline upon her Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate.

10. Respondent agrees that, at a hearing, Complainant could establish a *prima facie* case with respect to the charges in the First Amended Accusation, and that Respondent hereby gives up her right to contest those charges.

11. Respondent agrees that her Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate is subject to discipline and she agrees to be bound by the Board's probationary terms as set forth in the Disciplinary Order below.

CONTINGENCY

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

13. Respondent agrees that if she ever petitions for early termination or modification of probation, or if an accusation and/or petition to revoke probation is filed against her before the Board, all of the charges and allegations contained in First Amended Accusation No. 800-2017-038476 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 Respondent, issue and enter the following Disciplinary Order:

DISCIPLINARY ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. G 79715 issued to Respondent Karima Hirani, M.D. is revoked. However, the revocation is stayed and Respondent is placed on probation for two years on the following terms and conditions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. 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 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.

8. 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14. 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. 800-2017-038476 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 full discussed it with my attorney, Richard A. Jaffe. I understand the stipulation and the effect it wil have on my Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate. I enter into this Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently, and agree to be bound by the Decision and Order of the Medical Board of California.

DATED: 7/10/20

KARIMA HIRANI, M.D.
Respondent

I concur with this stipulated settlement.

DATED: 7/13/20

RICHARD A. JAFFE
Attorney for Respondent

ENDORSEMENT

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

DATED: July 13, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

XAVIER BECERRA
Attorney General of California
JUDITH T. ALVARADO
Supervising Deputy Attorney General

Peggie B. Tarwater

PEGGIE BRADFORD TARWATER
Deputy Attorney General
Attorneys for Complainant

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Exhibit A

First Amended Accusation No. 800-2017-038476

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

In the Matter of the First Amended Accusation Against: KARIMA HIRANI, M.D. 9736 Venice Boulevard Culver City, California 90232 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate G 79715, Respondent.	Case No. 800-2017-038476 **FIRST AMENDED ACCUSATION**

PARTIES

1. Christine J. Lally (Complainant) brings this First Amended Accusation solely in her official capacity as the Interim Executive Director of the Medical Board of California, Department of Consumer Affairs (Board).

2. On August 24, 1994, the Medical Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate Number G 79715 to Karima Hirani, M.D. (Respondent). The Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on April 30, 2020, unless renewed.

JURISDICTION

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

4. Section 2227 of the Code provides that a licensee who is found guilty under the Medical Practice Act may have his or her license revoked, suspended for a period not to exceed one year, placed on probation and required to pay the costs of probation monitoring, or such other action taken in relation to discipline as the Board deems proper.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS

5. Code section 2234 states, in pertinent part:

> The board shall take action against any licensee who is charged with unprofessional conduct. In addition to other provisions of this article, unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
>
> (a) Violating or attempting to violate, directly or indirectly, assisting in or abetting the violation of, or conspiring to violate any provision of this chapter.
>
> (b) Gross negligence.
>
> (c) Repeated negligent acts. To be repeated, there must be two or more negligent acts or omissions. An initial negligent act or omission followed by a separate and distinct departure from the applicable standard of care shall constitute repeated negligent acts.
>
> (1) An initial negligent diagnosis followed by an act or omission medically appropriate for that negligent diagnosis of the patient shall constitute a single negligent act.
>
> (2) When the standard of care requires a change in the diagnosis, act, or omission that constitutes the negligent act described in paragraph (1), including, but 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.
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> ¶ . . . . ¶

6. Code section 725 states:

> (a) Repeated acts of clearly excessive prescribing, furnishing, dispensing, or administering of drugs or treatment, repeated acts of clearly excessive use of diagnostic procedures, or repeated acts of clearly excessive use of diagnostic or treatment facilities as determined by the standard of the community of licensees is unprofessional conduct for a physician and surgeon, dentist, podiatrist, psychologist, physical therapist, chiropractor, optometrist, speech-language pathologist, or audiologist.

(b) Any person who engages in repeated acts of clearly excessive prescribing or administering of drugs or treatment is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars ($100) nor more than six hundred dollars ($600), or by imprisonment for a term of not less than 60 days nor more than 180 days, or by both that fine and imprisonment.

(c) A practitioner who has a medical basis for prescribing, furnishing, dispensing, or administering dangerous drugs or prescription controlled substances shall not be subject to disciplinary action or prosecution under this section.

(d) No physician and surgeon shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to this section for treating intractable pain in compliance with Section 2241.5.

FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Gross Negligence)

7. Respondent is subject to disciplinary action for gross negligence under Code section 2234, subdivision (b). The circumstances are as follows:

8. Respondent practices functional medicine and complementary alternative medicine in an integrative practice.

9. On September 17, 2017, Patient 1, a nine-year-old female, presented to Respondent with a chief complaint of intermittent stomach pain. Her health history also included recurrent ear infections, fear of kidnapping, and a history of an autoimmune illness called Henoch Schonlein Purpura, a disease causing swelling of small blood vessels commonly found in children. Overall, Patient 1 had seen her pediatrician in May 2015 for an insect bite that had resulted in a fever. Patient 1's mother explained that she wished to be proactive in minimizing stomach sensitivities that may disrupt schooling.

10. On the first visit, Respondent recommended a gluten-free, dairy-free, sugar-free diet. She recommended six nutritional supplements. She ordered approximately 30 laboratory panels, which included redundancies, such as two celiac panels from two different laboratories and herpes simplex virus antibody and human herpes virus 6 antibody tests from two different laboratories. Many of the labs were not relevant to Patient 1's chief complaint of intermittent stomachache.

11. Respondent proceeded with extensive testing while also acknowledging that blood tests are often not useful in looking for food sensitivities and that positive outcomes for Patient 1's complaints could occur with a simple anti-inflammatory dietary intervention.

12. Patient 1 returned for a follow-up visit on October 18, 2017. Patient 1's mother reported that the stomachaches had subsided with the dietary changes, a probiotic, a digestive enzyme, and L-glutamine amino acid.

13. The standard of care requires a physician practicing complementary medicine to order tests appropriate for the nature and severity of the chief complaint.

14. Respondent was grossly negligent in the care and treatment of Patient 1 in that she engaged in excessive and unnecessary testing without medical justification.

SECOND CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Repeated Negligent Acts)

15. Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under section 2234, subdivision (c), in that she committed repeated negligent acts in her care and treatment of Patient 1. The circumstances are as follows.

16. The allegations in the First Cause for Discipline are incorporated by reference.

17. Respondent diagnosed Patient 1 with active Lyme disease, active varicella (chicken pox), and mycoplasma (walking pneumonia) infections, diagnoses which are not properly supported by Patient 1's laboratory results. During an interview related to Patient 1's care conducted on behalf of the Board, Respondent admitted that Patient 1 did not have active infections to these agents, but rather an autoimmune process or reaction to the agents that could have been better explained.

18. Respondent told the mother of Patient 1 that Lyme disease could be transmitted through spider bites and mosquito bites without explaining that this view contradicted the opinion of the Centers for Disease Control that the disease is transmitted through tick bites or the rare process of *in utero* transmission.

19. Respondent recommended a homeopathic treatment for the Lyme disease, consisting of low dose immunotherapy (LDI).[1] LDI, while safe, is not the conventional treatment for Lyme

[1] LDI involves obtaining liquid antigens from a compounding pharmacy and diluting the liquid hundreds of times such that it contains little of the original substances. Homeopathic doctors believe that if properly diluted, a substance that causes disease symptoms in a healthy person can improve the symptoms in a sick person.

disease. Respondent did not explain to the mother of Patient 1 that LDI is an alternative and complementary medicine treatment for Lyme disease nor did she explain that there are no peer-reviewed studies supporting its use. She did not explain or offer the conventional Lyme disease treatment for Patient 1.

20. Respondent told Patient 1's mother that Patient 1 was not very symptomatic despite the three infections, allergies, and "the mold thing going on." Respondent said nobody else would find "it" and that, "You're dodging a big bullet if you follow my recommendations."

21. The standard of care is to interpret laboratory tests accurately, explain the results to patients in an understandable way, and to explain the risks and benefits of treatments offered.

22. Respondent departed from the standard of care in diagnosing active Lyme, Varicella, and Mycoplasma infections instead of taking adequate time to fully explain the autoimmune phenomena.

23. Respondent departed from the standard of care by stating that Lyme disease can be transmitted by spiders and mosquitoes without explaining that this opinion contradicts that of the Centers for Disease control.

24. Respondent departed from the standard of care in offering LDI treatment without explaining the homeopathic nature of the treatment and that there are no peer-reviewed studies supporting its use.

THIRD CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Excessive Prescribing or Treatment)

25. By reason of the facts alleged in the First Cause for Discipline, Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under section 725, in that she engaged in excessive testing and treatment in her care and treatment of Patient 1.

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PRAYER

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

1. Revoking or suspending Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate Number G 79715, issued to Respondent Karima Hirani, M.D.;

2. Revoking, suspending or denying approval of Respondent's authority to supervise physician assistants and advanced practice nurses;

3. If placed on probation, ordering Respondent to pay the Board the costs of probation monitoring; and

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

DATED: MAR 23 2020

CHRISTINE J. LALLY
Interim Executive Director
Medical Board of California
Department of Consumer Affairs
State of California
Complainant

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