

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

In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Stephen Sung Duk Choi, M.D.

**Physician's and Surgeon's
Certificate No. C 50603**

Respondent.

Case No. 800-2021-078872

DECISION

The attached Stipulated Surrender of License 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 May 4, 2023.

IT IS SO ORDERED April 27, 2023.

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA



**Reji Varghese
Interim Executive Director**

1 ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
2 JUDITH T. ALVARADO
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
3 REBECCA L. SMITH
Deputy Attorney General
4 State Bar No. 179733
300 South Spring Street, Suite 1702
5 Los Angeles, CA 90013
Telephone: (213) 269-6475
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Attorneys for Complainant
7

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

12 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2021-078872

13 STEPHEN SUNG DUK CHOI, M.D.
18560 East Stonegate Lane
Rowland Heights, CA 91748

14 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
15 No. C 50603,

**STIPULATED SURRENDER OF
LICENSE AND ORDER**

16 Respondent.
17

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

20 **PARTIES**

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

25 2. Stephen Sung Duk Choi, M.D. (Respondent) is represented in this proceeding by
26 attorney, Douglas Hugh Ridley, whose address is 18 East High Street, Suite A, Moorpark,
27 California 93021-1119.

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1 3. On or about June 20, 2001, the Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
2 No. C 50603 to Respondent. That license was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the
3 charges brought in Accusation No. 800-2021-078872 and expired on January 31, 2023.

4 **JURISDICTION**

5 4. Accusation No. 800-2021-078872 was filed before the Board, and is currently
6 pending against Respondent. The Accusation and all other statutorily required documents were
7 properly served on Respondent. A copy of Accusation No. 800-2021-078872 is attached as
8 Exhibit A and incorporated by reference.

9 **ADVISEMENT AND WAIVERS**

10 5. Respondent has carefully read, fully discussed with counsel, and understands the
11 charges and allegations in Accusation No. 800-2021-078872. Respondent also has carefully read,
12 fully discussed with counsel, and understands the effects of this Stipulated Surrender of License
13 and Order.

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

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

22 **CULPABILITY**

23 8. Respondent understands that the charges and allegations in Accusation No. 800-2021-
24 078872, if proven at a hearing, constitute cause for imposing discipline upon his Physician's and
25 Surgeon's Certificate.

26 9. For the purpose of resolving the Accusation without the expense and uncertainty of
27 further proceedings, Respondent agrees that, at a hearing, Complainant could establish a factual
28 basis for the charges in the Accusation and that those charges constitute cause for discipline.

1 Respondent hereby gives up his right to contest that cause for discipline exists based on those
2 charges.

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

6 CONTINGENCY

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

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

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

21 ORDER

22 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No. C 50603, issued
23 to Respondent Stephen Sung Duk Choi, M.D., is surrendered and accepted by the Board.

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

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2. Respondent shall lose all rights and privileges as a physician and surgeon in California as of the effective date of the Board's Decision and Order.

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

4. If Respondent ever files an application for licensure or a petition for reinstatement in the State of California, the Board shall treat it as a petition for reinstatement. Respondent must comply with all the laws, regulations and procedures for reinstatement of a revoked or surrendered license in effect at the time the petition is filed, and all of the charges and allegations contained in Accusation No. 800-2021-078872 shall be deemed to be true, correct and admitted by Respondent when the Board determines whether to grant or deny the petition.

5. Respondent shall pay the agency its costs of investigation and enforcement in the amount of \$9,916.75 (nine thousand nine hundred sixteen dollars and seventy-five cents) prior to issuance of a new or reinstated license.

6. 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 agency in the State of California, all of the charges and allegations contained in Accusation, No. 800-2021-078872 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 licensure.

ACCEPTANCE

I have carefully read the above Stipulated Surrender of License and Order and have fully discussed it with my attorney Douglas Hugh Ridley. 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: March 16, 2023

STEPHEN SUNG DUK CHOI, M.D.
Respondent

1 I have read and fully discussed with Respondent STEPHEN SUNG DUK CHOI, M.D. the
2 terms and conditions and other matters contained in this Stipulated Surrender of License and
3 Order. I approve its form and content.

4 DATED: 3-17-23


Douglas Hugh Ridley
Attorney for Respondent

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7 **ENDORSEMENT**

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

10 DATED: 3-20-23

Respectfully submitted,

11 ROB BONTA
12 Attorney General of California
13 JUDITH T. ALVARADO
14 Supervising Deputy Attorney General


15 REBECCA L. SMITH
16 Deputy Attorney General
17 Attorneys for Complainant

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Exhibit A

Accusation No. 800-2021-078872

1 ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California
2 JUDITH T. ALVARADO
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
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11 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

12 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2021-078872

13 **STEPHEN SUNG DUK CHOI, M.D.**
14 **18560 Stonegate Lane**
Rowland Heights, CA 91748-5169

A C C U S A T I O N

15 **Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate**
16 **No. C 50603,**

Respondent.

17
18
19 **PARTIES**

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

23 2. On or about June 20, 2001, the Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
24 Number C 50603 to Stephen Sung Duk Choi, M.D. (Respondent). That license was in full force
25 and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on January 31, 2023,
26 unless renewed.

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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 2004 of the Code states:

The board shall have the responsibility for the following:

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

(b) The administration and hearing of disciplinary actions.

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

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

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

...

5. 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.

6. Section 822 of the Code states:

If a licensing agency determines that its licentiate's ability to practice his or her profession safely is impaired because the licentiate is mentally ill, or physically ill affecting competency, the licensing agency may take action by any one of the following methods:

(a) Revoking the licentiate's certificate or license.

(b) Suspending the licentiate's right to practice.

(c) Placing the licentiate on probation.

(d) Taking such other action in relation to the licentiate as the licensing agency in its discretion deems proper.

The licensing section shall not reinstate a revoked or suspended certificate or license until it has received competent evidence of the absence or control of the condition which caused its action and until it is satisfied that with due regard for the public health and safety the person's right to practice his or her profession may be safely reinstated.

CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Inability to Practice)

7. Respondent Stephen Sung Duk Choi, M.D. is subject to disciplinary action under section 822 of the Code, in that he is unable to engage in the practice of medicine due to physical and mental impairments following a traumatic brain injury requiring emergency neurosurgery in October 2021, causing cognitive and physical deficits, including memory loss.

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 C 50603, issued to Stephen Sung Duk Choi, M.D.;

2. Revoking, suspending or denying approval of Stephen Sung Duk Choi, M.D.'s authority to supervise physician assistants and advanced practice nurses; and

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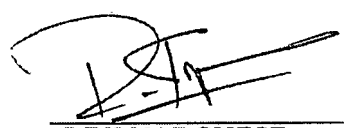
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3. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.

DATED: FEB 10 2023



REJI VARGHESE
Deputy Director
Medical Board of California
Department of Consumer Affairs
State of California
Complainant

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