

IN THE MATTER OF	*	BEFORE THE
FRANCISCO WARD, D.O.	*	MARYLAND STATE
Respondent	*	BOARD OF PHYSICIANS
License Number: H45795	*	Case Number: 2225-0007

* * * * *

CONSENT ORDER

On June 5, 2025 Disciplinary Panel B (“Panel B”) of the Maryland State Board of Physicians (the “Board”) filed amended charges¹ against **FRANCISCO WARD, D.O.** (the “Respondent”), License Number **H45795**, under the Maryland Medical Practice Act (the “Act”), Md. Code Ann., Health Occupations (“Health Occ.”) §§ 14-101 *et seq.* (2021 Repl. Vol. & 2024 Supp.). Panel B charged the Respondent with violating the following provisions of the statute:²

Health Occ. § 14-404. Denials, reprimands, probations, suspensions, and revocations – Grounds.

- (a) Subject to the hearing provisions of § 14–405 of this subtitle, a disciplinary panel, on the affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum of the disciplinary panel, may reprimand any licensee, place any licensee on probation, or suspend or revoke a license if the licensee:

...

- (3) Is guilty of:
- (i) Immoral conduct in the practice of medicine; or
 - (ii) Unprofessional conduct in the practice of medicine[.]

¹ The amended charges superseded any previously filed Charges against the Respondent in Case Number 2225-0007.

² Panel B also charged the Respondent with violating the provisions of Health Occ. § 1-212 and the Board’s regulations at COMAR 10.32.17.

On October 29, 2025, Panel B was convened as a Disciplinary Committee for Case Resolution (“DCCR”) in this matter. Based on negotiations occurring as a result of this DCCR, the Respondent agreed to enter into this Consent Order, consisting of Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Order and Consent.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Panel B finds the following:

Background

1. At all times relevant to these charges, the Respondent was and is licensed to practice medicine in the State of Maryland. The Respondent was initially licensed to practice medicine on February 25, 1994, and his license is scheduled to expire on September 30, 2027, subject to renewal.
2. At all times relevant, the Respondent was and is board-certified in pain medicine and physical medicine and rehabilitation.
3. At all times relevant, the Respondent worked in an office-based practice focusing on pain management. Initially, the Respondent owned a private practice located in Columbia, Maryland; however, around late 2019, he sold the practice to a corporation providing pain management services (“Practice A”) and became a salaried employee out of a Baltimore City location.³ The Respondent held hospital privileges at one Baltimore City hospital.

³ For confidentiality purposes, the name of patients, individuals and health care facilities are not disclosed in this Consent Order.

4. On or about July 10, 2024, the Board received a complaint from the Howard County Police Department (“HCPD”) informing the Board that the Respondent was under investigation based on allegations by a patient (“Patient A”) regarding the Respondent’s conduct.

5. On or about August 15, 2024, the Board notified the Respondent of the complaint and requested a response. On August 26, 2024, the Respondent filed a written response to the complaint in which he acknowledged that Patient A had been his patient from approximately 2018 through April 2024.

6. Shortly after receiving the complaint, the Board initiated an investigation including but not limited to conducting interviews of the Respondent and Patient A and reviews of relevant documents, including but not limited to transcripts and medical records.

Interview of Patient A and Review of Medical Records

7. Patient A was a widowed female in her 60s who initially presented to Practice A in late 2018 for pain management for complaints of headache, and pain in the hips, knees and back.⁴

8. Over the years, from late 2018 through April 2024, the Respondent treated Patient A for various falls and injuries including left wrist (fracture), right shoulder (fracture), right knee, right hip, distal femur, and lower back.

⁴ The Respondent was unable to provide the Board with medical records from his private practice with the precise date Patient A began care with him. Around that time, the Respondent was transitioning from his solo practice to employment with Practice A.

9. The Respondent treated Patient A's pain with opioids. During Patient A's pain treatment, the Respondent intermittently and concurrently treated Patient A for opioid use disorder with Suboxone/buprenorphine and clonidine.

10. In 2022, according to Patient A's progress notes, she was found completely disabled in a worker's compensation case, based on a fall that took place on December 19, 2019.⁵ On April 2, 2024, the Respondent documented that Patient A was planning to return to work.

11. Patient A told Board staff during an August 1, 2024, interview with Board staff ("Board interview"), that the Respondent began texting her around October 2020.⁶

12. On or about December 25, 2020, the Respondent sent a text to Patient A stating, "Merry Christmas Princess [first name]."

13. On or about January 6, 2021, the Respondent asked Patient A to "go shooting."

14. Patient A provided the Board with multiple text messages of a personal nature between Patient A and the Respondent through January 2024 including the Respondent and Patient A separately at target practice, request to go shooting at a range, a billboard regarding a DWI, a discussion about switching from texting to "Whats-App" as it was "fast, simple and secure," personal photographs including a photograph of the Respondent's

⁵ The Respondent wrote a letter dated November 16, 2020, that Patient A was under his care for a work-related injury that took place on December 18, 2019, and was permanently disabled and unable to be engaged in gainful employment.

⁶ During a July 24, 2024, hearing on peace /protective orders that took place in the District Court for *Baltimore County* ("Baltimore County hearing") the Respondent acknowledged that he texted Patient A.

daughter and niece at his property located in Wicomico County ("Property A"), and messages about their personal meetings.

15. Additionally, Patient A provided several text messages between Patient A and the Respondent to the Board regarding medical concerns she communicated with the Respondent during the same time frame as personal text messages.

16. On or about April 17, 2024, Patient A was seen by the Respondent at Practice A during which she described an altercation where she was "robbed" of five fentanyl patches, was struck on the side of the head and sustained lacerations on her left forearm. The Respondent recommended that Patient A enroll in rehabilitation for her opioid use. The Respondent recommended that Patient A follow up with a psychiatrist and wrote that he no longer felt safe treating Patient A.

17. On or about April 22, 2024, Practice A sent Patient A a letter by regular mail discharging her from the Respondent's practice due to "divergent views" and recommended that she admit herself to a rehabilitation facility for further treatment. At the time of her discharge, the Respondent had been prescribing two opioids (one short-acting and one long-acting) to Patient A.

18. Following the discharge, around April 24, 2024, Patient A attended rehabilitation and subsequently told Board staff during her interview that during a group therapy session the group recommended she get some closure with the Respondent and ask him to explain why this relationship had happened.

June 6, 2024, Incident

19. On or about June 6, 2024, at approximately 8:00 a.m., according to a written statement by Patient A, she drove to the Respondent's personal residence and from her "truck" waited for the Respondent at the end of his driveway. According to her statement, when the Respondent drove out of his driveway, at approximately 8:45 a.m., Patient A asked if they could talk, and the Respondent suggested a quiet place down the road. According to Patient A, they drove approximately two to three miles from his residence to a parking lot away from buildings, and Patient A pulled up beside the Respondent's vehicle, exited her vehicle and entered his. Patient A wrote that she asked the Respondent for an apology. According to Patient A, the Respondent pulled his pants down and tried to push Patient A's head onto his penis. During the incident, Patient A alleged that she sustained an injury to her right hand. She reported she screamed an expletive at the Respondent and "jumped out of the car." The Respondent started his car and "raced off."⁷

20. On June 7, 2024, Patient A contacted Practice A to request a discharge and referral to another pain management practice.

21. Patient A said she reported the incident to her sister, and on or about June 10, 2024, she reported the incident to the Howard County Police Department.

22. On August 6, 2025, the Circuit Court for Howard County E-served the Respondent with a NOTICE OF NOLLE PROSEQUI AND DISMISSAL of criminal charges of

⁷ The Respondent disputes that the criminal assault and sexual offense occurred.

second-degree assault, indecent exposure, and fourth-degree sexual offence – sexual contact.

Peace and Protective Orders Filed in the District Court for Baltimore County

23. On or about June 12, 2024, the Respondent filed a peace order against Patient A in the District Court for Baltimore County, alleging Patient A had threatened and harassed him at his office and home.

24. On or about June 13, 2024, Patient A filed a protective order in the District Court for Baltimore County against the Respondent in protection of Patient A and her son, alleging dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

25. The Baltimore County Judge heard both petitions for the peace order and the protective order simultaneously as the allegations both arose from the June 6, 2024, incident. The Baltimore County Judge allowed Patient A to admit evidence at the hearing relating to her personal relationship with the Respondent that occurred before the June 6, 2024, incident.

26. In response to questioning during the hearing on whether the Respondent had shared personal information with Patient A relating to his family, he responded:

When I talk to my patients, I use transference, and I do...I interact with my patients in a very open and transparent way. It's my communication skill and how I try to help my patients...

27. An August 5, 2022, a text from the Respondent to Patient A stated:

Good morning. How do you feel today? I am going to [Property A] at some point. Interested in keeping [sic] hanging out?⁸

⁸ Property A refers to a location of a second property owned by the Respondent.

28. In response to the August 5, 2022, text, the Respondent acknowledged to the Judge that he “may” have invited Patient A to Property A. The Respondent testified during the 2024 hearing that he has “lots of interaction with my patients both in and out of work” and that he sees patients “occasionally after hours, off work premises.”

29. The Judge found that neither party had met its burden with regard to the narrowly tailored orders and dismissed both petitions. The Judge found, however, that the evidence produced by Patient A regarding their communications was compelling noting:

There is an astounding amount of text messages from [the Respondent] to [Patient A] and [Patient A] to [the Respondent], that ...[the Respondent] said he didn't recall any of the messages. The messages were about two inches thick that to me were absolutely, clearly communications between the two that were not professional in nature. Absolutely not. Content, the references, the timing of the messages...there was a lot...that was to me very clearly not professional, and personal in nature, which completely contradicted [the Respondent's] testimony about their relationship, which really affected his credibility today.

Respondent's Interview

On December 23, 2024, Board staff interviewed the Respondent under oath regarding the allegations, as set forth in part below:

30. The Respondent characterized Patient A as the aggressor, having kissed him during an office visit on one occasion. The Respondent described this as an “assault.” There is no documentation in the medical record of this incident, nor did the Respondent discharge Patient A from his practice for this alleged incident.

31. Early during the Respondent's treatment of Patient A, Patient A gave the Respondent an opera ticket for a performance in D.C., which he accepted, purportedly not knowing that Patient A would also attend. The Respondent testified that he does not recall how it

occurred, but he woke up in a hotel room the next morning with Patient A. According to the Respondent, she told him “Nothing happened.” He acknowledged to Board staff that he had a “drink”, but his impression was that he “was drugged.”

32. On January 30, 2020, Patient A sent the Respondent an e-gift card for his birthday in the amount of \$200.⁹ The message said, “Happy Birthday!!! This year you get to choose your own adventure. Let’s have fun and adventures. Pick a fun adventure!!”

33. Around 2020 or 2021, Patient A gave the Respondent gifts including a bottle of Johnny Walker Gold and an African silk garment from a work trip, which he accepted.

34. The Respondent acknowledged that around 2020 or 2021 he gave Patient A a “random piece of jewelry” that cost approximately \$199. He told Board staff “it may have been earrings.” When asked during a hearing before a Judge in the District Court for Baltimore County whether he had given Patient A earrings, he testified “no.”

35. The Respondent acknowledged that he typically would talk on the phone with Patient A between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., when he was out walking. The phone calls occurred more frequently during the Covid pandemic in 2021 and decreased after 2022, reportedly after Patient A became angry with him.

36. The Respondent acknowledged that he exchanged text messages with Patient A.

37. The Respondent was vague in his response as to whether Patient A had ever been in one of his vehicles but then acknowledged he drove with Patient A early in their

⁹ The Respondent provided the gift card to Board staff on December 31, 2024, characterizing it as “preparation for a future blackmail / extortion effort.”

relationship to Property A to meet his sister. He recalled, “ I may have introduced her to my sister.”

38. The Respondent acknowledged that he sent a picture to Patient A of himself holding his granddaughter in 2024. He testified that he “may have” sent her a photograph of his niece and daughter, but did not remember.

39. The Respondent sent Patient A a photograph of himself shooting in response to her sending him a photograph of herself at a shooting range.

40. According to the Respondent, Patient A sent him more than 20 texts asking him to go for drinks.

41. The Respondent denied that he crossed any boundaries with Patient A testifying:

I didn't cross professional boundaries with her. She crossed a lot. She assaulted me, in the first place. I should have let that be the end. But then I fell for the tears, for all the other stuff that went with it. You know, I fell for the nonsense.

42. The Respondent acknowledged that he and Patient A had shared locations with each other at one point on their phones. He testified that it was due to an “urgent matter” that he could not recall at the time, but stated it was for a “finite” period of time.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the Findings of Fact, Disciplinary Panel B of the Board concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent: Is guilty of: Unprofessional conduct in the practice of medicine, in violation of Health Occ. § 14-404(a)(3)(ii). Panel B dismisses the charges under Health Occ. § 14-404(a)(3)(i), Health Occ. § 1-212, and COMAR 10.32.17.

ORDER

It is, on the affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum of Disciplinary Panel B of the Board, hereby:

ORDERED that the Respondent is **REPRIMANDED**; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent is placed on probation¹⁰ for a minimum period of **TWO (2) YEARS** of the effective date of this Consent Order. During probation, the Respondent shall comply with the following probationary terms and conditions:

1. The Respondent shall undergo a comprehensive evaluation by the **Maryland Professional Rehabilitation Program ("MPRP")** and/or its agents. The following conditions apply:
 - (a) Within **5 business days** of the effective date of this Consent Order, the Respondent shall contact MPRP to schedule an initial consultation for enrollment;
 - (b) Within **15 business days** of the effective date of this Consent Order, the Respondent shall enter into a Participant Rehabilitation Agreement and Participant Rehabilitation Plan with MPRP;
 - (c) The Respondent shall fully and timely cooperate and comply with all MPRP's referrals, rules, and requirements, including, but not limited to, the terms and conditions of the Participant Rehabilitation Agreement(s) and Participant Rehabilitation Plan(s) entered with MPRP, and shall fully participate and comply with all therapy, treatment, evaluations, and screenings as directed by MPRP;
 - (d) The Respondent shall sign and update the written release/consent forms requested by the Board and MPRP, including release/consent forms to authorize MPRP to make verbal and written disclosures to the Board and to authorize the Board to disclose relevant information from MPRP

¹⁰ If the Respondent's license expires during the period of probation, the probation and any conditions of probation, will be tolled.

records and files in a public order. The Respondent shall not withdraw the release/consent;

- (e) The Respondent shall also sign any written release/consent forms to authorize MPRP to exchange with (i.e., disclose to and receive from) outside entities (including all of the Respondent's current therapists and treatment providers) verbal and written information concerning the Respondent and to ensure that MPRP is authorized to receive the medical records of the Respondent, including, but not limited to, mental health and drug or alcohol evaluation and treatment records. The Respondent shall not withdraw the release/consent;
- (f) If, upon the authorization of MPRP, the Respondent transfers to a rehabilitation program in another state, the Respondent's failure to comply with any term or condition of that state's [the out-of-state's] rehabilitation program, constitutes a violation of this Consent Order. The Respondent shall also sign any out-of-state written release/consent forms to authorize the Board to exchange with (i.e. disclose to and receive from) the out-of-state program verbal and written information concerning the Respondent, and to ensure that the Board is authorized to receive the medical records of the Respondent, including, but not limited to, mental health and drug or alcohol evaluation and treatment records. The Respondent shall not withdraw the release/consent;
- (g) The Respondent's failure to comply with any of the above terms or conditions including terms or conditions of the Participant Rehabilitation Agreement(s) or Participant Rehabilitation Plan(s) constitutes a violation of this Consent Order;

2. Within **SIX (6) MONTHS** of the effective date of this Consent Order, the Respondent is required to take and successfully complete **TWO** courses:

(1) Ethics and (2) Professional Boundaries. The following terms apply:

- (a) it is the Respondent's responsibility to locate, enroll in and obtain the disciplinary panel's approval of the courses before the courses are begun;
- (b) the Respondent must provide documentation to the disciplinary panel that the Respondent has successfully completed the courses;

(c) the courses may not be used to fulfill the continuing medical education credits required for license renewal;

(d) the Respondent is responsible for the cost of the courses; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall not apply for early termination of probation; and it is further

ORDERED that a violation of probation constitutes a violation of this Consent Order; and it is further

ORDERED that this Consent Order shall not be amended or modified, and future requests for modification will not be considered by the Board or a disciplinary panel; and it is further

ORDERED that after the minimum period of probation imposed by the Consent Order has passed, and the Respondent has fully and satisfactorily complied with all terms and conditions of probation, and MPRP notifies the Board of the Respondent's compliance with all MPRP's referrals, rules, and requirements, the Respondent may submit a written petition for termination of probation. After consideration of the petition, the Applicant's probation may be terminated through an order of the disciplinary panel. The Respondent may be required to appear before the disciplinary panel to discuss his petition for termination. The disciplinary panel may grant the petition to terminate the probation, through an order of the disciplinary panel, if the Respondent has complied with all the probationary terms and conditions and there are no pending complaints relating to the charges; and it is further

ORDERED that if the Respondent allegedly fails to comply with any term or condition imposed by this Consent Order, the Respondent shall be given notice and an opportunity for a hearing. If there is a genuine dispute as to a material fact, the hearing shall be before an Administrative Law Judge of the Office of Administrative Hearings followed by an exceptions process before a disciplinary panel; and if there is no genuine dispute as to a material fact, the Respondent shall be given a show cause hearing before a disciplinary panel; and it is further

ORDERED that after the appropriate hearing, if the disciplinary panel determines that the Respondent has failed to comply with any term or condition imposed by this Consent Order, the disciplinary panel may reprimand the Respondent, place the Respondent on probation with appropriate terms and conditions, or suspend or revoke the Respondent's license to practice medicine in Maryland. The disciplinary panel may, in addition to one or more of the sanctions set forth above, impose a civil monetary fine on the Respondent; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent is responsible for all costs incurred in fulfilling the terms and conditions of this Consent Order; and it is further

ORDERED that the effective date of the Consent Order is the date the Consent Order is signed by the Executive Director of the Board or her designee. The Executive Director or her designee signs the Consent Order on behalf of the disciplinary panel which has imposed the terms and conditions of this Consent Order; and it is further

ORDERED that this Consent Order is a public document. *See* Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. §§ 1-607, 14-411.1(b)(2) and Gen. Prov. § 4-333(b)(6).

12/08/2025
Date

Signature on file

Christine A. Farrelly, Executive Director
Maryland State Board of Physicians

CONSENT

I, Francisco Ward D.O., acknowledge that I have consulted with counsel before signing this document.

By this Consent, I agree to be bound by this Consent Order and all its terms and conditions and understand that the disciplinary panel will not entertain any request for amendments or modifications to any condition.

I assert that I am aware of my right to a formal evidentiary hearing, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 14-405 and Md. Code Ann., State Gov't §§ 10-201 *et seq.* concerning the pending charges. I waive this right and have elected to sign this Consent Order instead.

I acknowledge the validity and enforceability of this Consent Order as if entered after the conclusion of a formal evidentiary hearing in which I would have had the right to counsel, to confront witnesses, to give testimony, to call witnesses on my behalf, and to all other substantive and procedural protections as provided by law. I waive those procedural and substantive protections. I acknowledge the legal authority and the jurisdiction of the disciplinary panel to initiate these proceedings and to issue and enforce this Consent Order.

I voluntarily enter into and agree to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Consent Order as a resolution of the charges. I waive any right to contest the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and Order set out in the Consent Order. I waive all rights to appeal this Consent Order.

I sign this Consent Order, without reservation, and fully understand the language and meaning of its terms.

Signature on file

12/04/2025
Date

Francisco Ward, D.O.

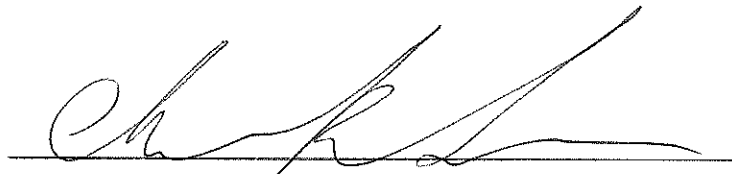
NOTARY

STATE OF Maryland

CITY/COUNTY OF Montgomery

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 4th day of December 2025, before me, a Notary Public of the foregoing State and City/County, Francisco Ward, D.O. personally appeared and made oath in due form of law that signing the foregoing Consent Order was his voluntary act and deed.

AS WITNESSETH my hand and notarial seal.



Notary Public

My Commission expires: 09/30/29

CHRIS LOUIS BUTLER-SAUNDERS
Notary Public
Montgomery County
Maryland
My Commission Expires Sept. 30, 2029