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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST:

Case No. LS 9901203 MED

THOMAS B. PULS, M.D.
RESPONDENT.

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

The parties to this action for the purposes of Wis. Stats. sec. 227.53 are:

Thomas B. Puls, M.D.
PO Box 316
Wautoma, WI 54982

Wisconsin Medical Examining Board
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

Department of Regulation and Licensing
Division of Enforcement
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

The parties in this matter agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final decision of this matter, subject to the approval of the Medical Examining Board. The Board has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

Accordingly, the Board in this matter adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Thomas B. Puls, M.D., Respondent, date of birth March 10, 1927, is licensed by the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board, but not currently registered, to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin pursuant to license number 11907, which was first granted August 13, 1954.
2. Respondent has not renewed his registration since it expired on October 31, 1997. Pursuant to §§ 440.08(3)(a), 448.07(1) and 448.13(1), Stats. and Wis. Adm. Code Med 14.06, Respondent could renew his registration at this time, by payment of fees and proof of completion of continuing education requirements.
3. On August 4, 1998, Respondent attempted to renew his registration to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin. The registration was denied because the check Respondent provided as payment of the fees was returned by his bank because there were insufficient funds in the account from which to pay the check.

4. Respondent's last address reported to the Department of Regulation and Licensing is PO Box 316, Wautoma, WI 54982.
5. Respondent's practice specialty is psychiatry.
6. During the Summer of 1998, Respondent was hospitalized at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, Wisconsin. While Respondent was hospitalized, a head CT scan was performed on Respondent, which revealed loss of brain tissue/cell mass.
7. During that hospitalization, an occupational therapy assessment of Respondent's overall functioning demonstrated difficulties with attention span and problem solving as well as memory loss and poor ability for new learning.
8. Because of those results, a neuropsychological test battery was given to Respondent. The results of the testing and the evaluation indicated that Respondent performs poorly in problem solving, particularly when asked to do so in novel and ambiguous situations, and that Respondent's insight and ability to make discriminating judgments is poor. Overall, Respondent demonstrated mild to moderate cognitive deficits.
9. Respondent's current cognitive functioning impairs his ability to practice medicine and surgery with reasonable skill and safety to patients and public.
10. The Special Purpose Examination (SPEX) of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States is a high-quality, objective, and standardized cognitive examination used as a tool in the assessment of current knowledge requisite for general, undifferentiated medical practice by physicians who hold or who have held valid, unrestricted licenses in a United States or Canadian jurisdiction.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Wisconsin Medical Examining Board has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to § 448.02(3), Stats.
2. The Wisconsin Medical Examining Board has authority to enter into this stipulated resolution of this matter pursuant to § 227.44(5) and 448.02(5), Stats.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. That Thomas B. Puls, M.D., Respondent, shall not be registered to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin, until Respondent has complied with the conditions set out in paragraph 2 below.
2. Respondent shall have provided proof sufficient to the Board that Respondent can practice medicine and surgery with reasonable skill and safety to patients and public. Such proof shall include:
 - a. A complete evaluation of Respondent's psychological and cognitive functioning, performed by mental health care professionals, who shall first be approved by the Board, which concludes that Respondent can practice medicine and surgery with reasonable skill and safety to patients and public. The evaluation shall include a neuropsychological evaluation.
 - b. Respondent having taken and passed the Special Purpose Examination (SPEX) of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States.

The rights of a party aggrieved by this Decision to petition the Board for rehearing and to petition for judicial review are set forth on the attached "Notice of Appeal Information".

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin this 20th day of January, 1999.

Wanda Roever

Secretary

Medical Examining Board