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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY	:	
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST	:	FINAL DECISION
	:	AND ORDER
THOMAS J. SCHROEPPEL, M.D.,	:	LS0404022MED
RESPONDENT	:	

Division of Enforcement
03 MED 150

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

Thomas J. Schroeppel, M.D.
1721 Weston St.
La Crosse, WI 54601

Wisconsin Medical Examining Board
1400 E. Washington Ave.
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 Wisconsin Medical Examining Board received a Stipulation submitted by the parties to the above-captioned matter. The Stipulation, a copy of which is attached hereto, was executed by Thomas J. Schroeppel, M.D, Respondent, and by his attorney, Thomas H. Taylor; and by Gilbert C. Lubcke, attorney for the Department of Regulation and Licensing, Division of Enforcement. Based upon the Stipulation of the parties, the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board makes the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Thomas J. Schroeppel, M.D., Respondent herein, 1721 Weston Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 54601, was born on 8/2/73 and is licensed and currently registered to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin, license #43827, said license having been granted on 9/24/01. Respondent was enrolled in the graduate medical education program sponsored by Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation, Inc. in collaboration with Gundersen Clinic, Ltd. and Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, Inc.

2. Respondent specializes in the practice of general surgery.

3. Respondent, at all times relevant to this complaint, practiced medicine as a general surgery resident at Gundersen Clinic, Ltd., a multi-specialty physician group practice in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, Inc., a tertiary hospital in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

4. LK, the patient herein, was born on 7/20/31.

5. On 6/10/02, the patient was hospitalized at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin under the care of Shanu N. Kothari, M.D. Dr. Kothari performed a right hemicolectomy for treatment of infiltrating mucinous adenocarcinoma. The patient was discharged from the hospital on 6/15/02.

6. On 6/27/02, the patient was readmitted to Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center under the care of Nirav Y. Patel, M.D. for symptoms of bilateral lower quadrant discomfort, abdominal distension and nausea. A CT scan performed on 6/27/02 identified a 5 cm. by 5 cm. fluid collection in the anterior midline of the upper pelvis consistent with a maturing abscess associated with a possible anastomotic leak. On 6/27/02, the patient underwent a percutaneous drainage of the abscess and was placed on IV antibiotics.

7. At various times over the course of the patient's hospitalization, Thomas J. Schroeppel, M.D., Nirav Y. Patel, M.D. and Shanu N. Kothari, M.D. provided medical care and treatment to the patient. Respondent was involved in providing medical care and treatment to the patient from 6/27/02 through the morning of 7/1/02.

8. On 6/29/02, Respondent entered an order for Colchicine 2 mg IV administered over 2 to 5 minutes, then 0.5 mg. every 6 hours IV. The order did not include any stop order or other directions or criteria for termination of the administration of the Colchicine.

9. Colchicine is a drug used for the treatment of gout and has potentially serious side-effects including bone marrow suppression, multi-system failure and death.

10. The patient's medical record for this admission did not document any symptoms associated with an acute attack of gout on or about 6/29/02.

11. The patient, pursuant to the order for Colchicine as entered by Respondent on 6/29/02, was administered IV Co as follows:

Date/ Time	Dosage Administered	Cumulative Dose (mg.)
6/29/02 @ 1100	2 mg over 2 - 5 minutes, IV	2.0
@ 1700	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	2.5
@ 2330	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	3.0
6/30/02 @ 0700	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	3.5
@ 1245	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	4.0
@ 1810	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	4.5
@ 2400	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	5.0
7/01/02 @ 0600	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	5.5
@ 1800	(On Hold)	5.5
@ 2345	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	6.0
7/02/02 @ 0530	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	6.5
@ 1200	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	7.0
@ 1850	(No IV)	7.0
@ 2400	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	7.5
7/03/02 @ 0615	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	8.0
@ 1140	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	8.5
@ 1830	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	9.0
@ 2345	(CME not here)	9.0
7/04/02 @ 0130	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	9.5
@ 0630	(CME not here)	9.5
@ 0745	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	10.0
@ 0830	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	10.5
@ 1400	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	11.0
@ 2000	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	11.5
7/05/02 @ 0215	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	12.0
@ 0850	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	12.5
@ 1415	0.5 mg every 6 hours IV	13.0

12. On 7/1/02, Dr. Kothari assumed primary responsibility for management of the patient's care.

13. Respondent did not monitor or document the response of the patient's symptoms to the Colchicine over the period of time that he was providing care for the patient.

14. The patient's condition deteriorated throughout the period of hospitalization. Respondent, Dr. Patel and Dr. Kothari focused their investigation on potential infectious causes for the patient's deteriorating condition.

15. On 7/5/02, Dr. Kothari obtained an infectious disease consult. The infectious disease consultant noted that the patient had leukopenia and thrombocytopenia and concluded that these conditions were most probably due to the amount of Colchicine that had been administered to the patient. The infectious disease consultant recommended that the administration of the Colchicine be terminated.

16. The administration of the Colchicine was terminated on 7/5/02 with the last dose administered at 1415.

17. The patient's condition continued to deteriorate with multi-system organ failure. The patient was placed on dialysis and required increased doses of pressors to support his blood pressure. The family made the decision to withdraw support and the patient died on 7/9/02.

18. Respondent's management of the patient's medical condition as set forth above fell below the minimum standards of competence accepted in the profession in the following respects:

a. Respondent ordered IV Colchicine for the patient without documenting any symptoms consistent with an acute attack of gout.

b. Respondent ordered IV Colchicine for the patient without specifying in the order any stop order or other directions or criteria for termination of the administration of the drug.

c. Respondent failed to monitor and document the response of the patient's symptoms to the IV Colchicine.

d. Respondent continued the administration of the IV Colchicine after the patient had been administered the maximum recommended cumulative dose of the drug on 6/30/02.

19. Respondent's conduct created the unacceptable risks to the health, welfare and safety of the patient that:

a. The patient would be administered Colchicine, a drug with potentially serious side-effects, when the patient did not have a condition that justified the administration of this drug.

b. The patient would be administered a cumulative dose of Colchicine, a drug with potentially serious side-effects, in excess of the amount necessary to resolve the patient's symptoms.

c. The patient would be administered a cumulative dose of Colchicine in excess of the maximum recommended cumulative dose thereby resulting in a Colchicine overdose with the accompanying unacceptable risks of bone marrow suppression, multi- system failure and death.

20. To avoid or minimize the unacceptable risks, the Respondent should have:

a. Documented symptoms of an acute attack of gout before undertaking a course of Colchicine treatment for the condition.

b. Entered an order for the administration of IV Colchicine, if indicated by symptoms of an acute attack of gout, which would have included criteria for termination of the administration of the drug. These criteria would have included directions for termination of the drug upon satisfactory response of the patient's symptoms to the administration of the drug, upon the development of adverse side-effects to the administration of the drug, by a specified end date and time, or upon administration of the maximum recommended cumulative dose of 4 mg.,

whichever event was the first to occur.

c. Monitored the patient for a satisfactory response of the patient's symptoms to the administration of the Colchicine and for the development of any adverse side-effects from the administration of the drug.

d. Terminated the administration of the IV Colchicine when the maximum recommended cumulative dose of 4 mg. had been reached.

21. There were multiple other contributing causes for the patient's death including, without limitation:

a. The original order for IV Colchicine by a resident, Thomas Schroeppel, M.D. on June 29, 2002;

b. The failure of that resident and others involved in the patient's care to check the aggregate maximum dose of IV Colchicine and place a stop order on that medication;

c. The failure of that resident and others involved in the patient's care to order a consult with a Rheumatologist to oversee the administration of IV Colchicine;

d. The lack of adequate communication between different staff involved in the care and treatment of the patient;

e. The absence of a prompt in the hospital pharmacy's order entry system to identify and monitor the aggregate maximum dose of IV Colchicine and

f. The absence of formal competency based orientation and assessment of staff in the hospital pharmacy.

22. From July 27 through 30, 2004, the Respondent attended a "Pharmacology For Advanced Practice Clinicians" course sponsored by Contemporary Forums in San Francisco, California, receiving credit for 28.5 hours of continuing education credits.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Wisconsin Medical Examining Board has jurisdiction in this proceeding pursuant to Wis. Stats. sec. 448.02.

2. The Wisconsin Medical Examining Board has the authority to resolve this proceeding by Stipulation without an evidentiary hearing pursuant to Wis. Stats. sec. 227.44(5).

3. Respondent's conduct as herein described was unprofessional conduct contrary to Wis. Stats. sec. 448.02(3) and Wis. Admin. Code sec. MED 10.02(2)(h) in that he engaged in conduct that tended to constitute a danger to the health, welfare and safety of the patient.

4. The Wisconsin Medical Examining Board has the authority pursuant to Wis. Stats. sec. 440.22 to assess the costs of this proceeding against Respondent.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the Stipulation of the parties is approved.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent's license to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin will be and hereby is limited as follows:

1. Respondent is required to take and satisfactorily complete a single pharmacology review course of at least 24 credit hours. The "Pharmacology For Advanced Practice Clinicians" course sponsored by Contemporary Forums in San Francisco, California between July 27 and 30, 2004 shall satisfy that requirement. A copy of materials more fully describing

the details and subject matter of this course is attached hereto.

2. The pharmacology review course entitled "Pharmacology For Advanced Practice Clinicians" attended by the Respondent between July 27 and 30, 2004 is approved by the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board as satisfying the requirement that the Respondent take and satisfactorily complete a single pharmacology review course.

3. Respondent shall within 60 days of the date of this Final Decision and order submit an affidavit to the Medical Examining Board stating under oath that he has attended 28.5 credit hours of the course entitled "Pharmacology for Advanced Practice Clinicians", sponsored by Contemporary Forums, along with supporting documentation of his attendance provided by the sponsoring organization. This affidavit and supporting documentation will be mailed to:

Department Monitor
Department of Regulation and Licensing
Division of Enforcement
1400 East Washington Ave.
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

4. Respondent is responsible for the full costs of the registration and attendance at the "Pharmacology for Advanced Practice Clinicians" pharmacology review course.

5. Respondent will not apply any of the continuing education credits earned in complying with the terms of this Order toward satisfaction of his Wis. Stats. sec. 448.13 biennial training requirements.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that upon compliance with all of the terms of this Final Decision and Order, Respondent's license to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin will be restored to full and active status.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent will pay costs in the amount of $2,340.83 within 30 days of the date of this Final Decision and Order. Payment of the costs will be made by certified check or money order, payable to the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing and mailed to:

Department Monitor
Department of Regulation and Licensing
Division of Enforcement
1400 East Washington Ave.
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that violation of any term or condition of this Final Decision and Order may constitute grounds for further disciplinary action. If the Medical Examining Board determines that there is probable cause to believe that Respondent has violated the terms of this Final Decision and Order and that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action, the Medical Examining Board may summarily suspend the license of Respondent to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin pending proceedings for revocation or other disciplinary action.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin, this 20th day of October, 2004.

WISCONSIN MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

Alfred Franger
Member of the Board