

# WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF REGULATION & LICENSING



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STATE OF WISCONSIN  
BEFORE THE MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

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IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY  
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

STEVEN L. ARMUS, M.D.,  
RESPONDENT.

:  
:  
:  
: FINAL DECISION AND ORDER  
:  
: ORDER 0000 348  
:

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[Division of Enforcement Case # 09 MED 095]

The parties to this action for the purposes of Wis. Stat. § 227.53 are:

Steven L. Armus, M.D.  
1515 S. Green Bay Road  
Racine, WI 53406

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

Wisconsin Medical Examining Board  
Department of Regulation and Licensing  
1400 East Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 8935  
Madison, WI 53708-8935

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

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 adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Steven L. Armus, M.D., Respondent, date of birth November 19, 1960, is licensed and currently registered by the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Wisconsin, pursuant to license number 34598, which was first granted July 20, 1993.

2. Respondent's last address reported to the Department of Regulation and Licensing is 1515 S. Green Bay Road, Racine, WI 53406 and his practice specialty is dermatology.

3. On March 20, 2009, Respondent was stopped by a Kenosha County Sheriff's Deputy for a traffic matter. The Deputy conducted a search of the vehicle and of Respondent and found two bags of cocaine totaling 26 grams. As a result, on March 23, 2009, Respondent was charged in Kenosha County Wisconsin Circuit Court case number 2009CF000342 with one count of Possession Cocaine with Intent To Deliver, a class D Felony, in violation of Wis. Stat. § 961.41(1m)(cm)3. This case is still pending.

4. Respondent was released on cash bond on March 23, 2009. On March 27, 2009, Respondent had an AODA assessment at Cornerstone Counseling Services (Cornerstone) in Brookfield, Wisconsin and was diagnosed with cocaine dependence. On March 28, Respondent started a partial hospitalization treatment program at the Dewey Center in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

5. On March 30, 2009, Respondent's attorney contacted the Division of Enforcement (DOE), reported Respondent's arrest and agreed that Respondent would not practice medicine until his treaters said he could do so safely.

6. On March 31, 2009, Respondent transferred his treatment to Resurrection Behavioral Health Professionals Program in Lincoln Park, Illinois. The program reported that Respondent made excellent progress, was compliant with all aspects of treatment and was discharged on May 21, 2009. Discharge recommendations included that he:

- a. Enroll in a Wisconsin assistance program which includes random urine monitoring.
- b. Be involved with the Caduceus aftercare program on Tuesday evenings.
- c. Have a strong 12-step recovery program with sponsorship.
- d. Participate in individual and group therapy at Cornerstone Counseling.
- e. Return to work with no access to controlled substances for a minimum of six months.

7. On May 28, 2009, Respondent began a program of random urine testing with FirstLab at a frequency of 56 tests per year. He has continued in the program to this date and has not missed a test and all test results have been negative for drug use.

8. Respondent's attorney provided the Division with evidence of the treatment, the discharge recommendations, Respondent's compliance with the recommendations and the procedures in place at his practice location to insure Respondent would not have access to controlled substances. DOE found this acceptable and on June 4, 2009 Respondent resumed practice.

9. On June 22, 2009, Respondent voluntarily surrendered his controlled substances privileges to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

10. Since his May 21 2009 discharge from Resurrection, Respondent continued counseling at Cornerstone with monthly counseling and in September 2009, transferred to an aftercare counseling group there. Respondent has been attending up to three AA meetings per

week since his initial assessment on March 27. Cornerstone reports that Respondent has met or exceeded his treatment goals and has a very good prognosis.

11. Respondent's alleged conduct, which is the basis for the criminal charge against him in Kenosha County Wisconsin Circuit Court case number 2009CF000342, has been considered in the discipline ordered in this matter. The resolution of the criminal charge, whatever it may be, shall not be the basis for either the imposition of any additional discipline or the modification of the discipline ordered below.

### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

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

2. Respondent has committed unprofessional conduct as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § Med 10.02(2)(r) and is subject to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 448.02(3).

### ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that the attached Stipulation is accepted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, effective the date of this Order:

### SUSPENSION

- A.1. The license of Steven L. Armus, M.D., to practice medicine and surgery in the State of Wisconsin is **SUSPENDED** for an indefinite period.
- A.2. Respondent shall not engage in the practice of medicine and surgery in any capacity unless his suspension is stayed and he is in full compliance with this Order. Respondent shall mail or physically deliver all indicia of registration to the Department Monitor within 14 days of the effective date of this Order.
- A.3. Upon a showing by Respondent of continuous, successful compliance for a period of at least **four (4) years** with the terms of this Order, including at least 600 hours of active practice for every year the suspension is stayed, the Board may grant a petition by the Respondent under paragraph D.4. for return of full licensure. At the Board's discretion, the 4-year period may be started anew for every substantial or repeated violation of any provision of Sections C or D of this Order.
- A.4. The Board may, on its own motion or at the request of the Department Monitor, grant full licensure at any time.

### STAY OF SUSPENSION

- B.1. The suspension is stayed immediately, based upon information that Respondent is in full compliance with this Order, and shall continue to be stayed so long as Respondent remains in compliance with the provisions of Sections C and D of this Order.
- B.2. The Board or its designee may, without hearing, remove the stay upon receipt of information that Respondent is in substantial or repeated violation of any provision of

Sections C or D of this Order. Repeated violation is defined as the multiple violation of the same provision or violation of more than one provision. The Board may, in conjunction with any removal of any stay, prohibit the Respondent for a specified period of time from seeking a reinstatement of the stay under paragraph B.4.

- B.3. This suspension becomes reinstated immediately upon notice of the removal of the stay being provided to Respondent either by:
- (a) Mailing to Respondent's last-known address provided to the Department of Regulation and Licensing pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 440.11; or
  - (b) Actual notice to Respondent or Respondent's attorney.
- B.4. The Board or its designee may reinstate the stay, if provided with sufficient information that Respondent is in compliance with the Order and that it is appropriate for the stay to be reinstated. Whether to reinstate the stay shall be wholly in the discretion of the Board or its designee.
- B.5. If Respondent requests a hearing on the removal of the stay, a hearing shall be held using the procedures set forth in Wis. Admin. Code ch. RL 2. The hearing shall be held in a timely manner with the evidentiary portion of the hearing being completed within 60 days of receipt of Respondent's request, unless waived by Respondent. Requesting a hearing does not stay the suspension during the pendency of the hearing process.

#### LIMITATIONS

The license to practice medicine and surgery of Respondent is LIMITED as set forth in Wis. Stat. § 448.02(3)(e), and as follows:

##### Treatment Required

- C.1. Respondent shall continue, in a drug and alcohol treatment program with a Treater acceptable to the Board or its designee. Respondent shall participate in, cooperate with, and follow all treatment recommended by Treater.
- C.2. Respondent shall immediately provide Treater with a copy of this Final Decision and Order and all other subsequent orders.
- C.3. Treater shall be responsible for coordinating Respondent's rehabilitation, drug monitoring and treatment program as required under the terms of this Order, and shall immediately report any relapse, violation of any of the terms and conditions of this Order, and any suspected unprofessional conduct, to the Department Monitor (See D.1., below). If Treater is unable or unwilling to serve as Treater, Respondent shall immediately seek approval of a successor Treater by the Board or its designee.
- C.4. The rehabilitation program shall include individual and/or group therapy sessions at a frequency to be determined by Treater. Therapy may end only upon a determination by the Board or its designee after receiving a petition for modification as required by D.4., below.
- C.5. Treater shall submit formal written reports to the Department Monitor on a quarterly basis, as directed by the Department Monitor. These reports shall assess Respondent's

progress in the drug and alcohol treatment program. Treater shall report immediately to the Department Monitor any violation or suspected violation of this Order.

#### Releases

- C.6. Respondent shall provide and keep on file with Treater, all treatment facilities and personnel, laboratories and collections sites current releases complying with state and federal laws. The releases shall allow the Board, its designee, and any employee of the Department of Regulation and Licensing, Division of Enforcement to: (a) obtain all urine, blood and hair specimen screen results and patient health care and treatment records and reports, and (b) discuss the progress of Respondent's treatment and rehabilitation. Copies of these releases shall immediately be filed with the Department Monitor.

#### AA/NA Meetings

- C.7. Respondent shall attend Narcotics Anonymous and/or Alcoholic Anonymous meetings or an equivalent program for recovering professionals, at the frequency recommended by Treater. Attendance of Respondent at such meetings shall be verified and reported monthly to Treater and the Department Monitor.

#### Sobriety

- C.8. Respondent shall abstain from all personal use of alcohol.
- C.9. Respondent shall abstain from all personal use of controlled substances as defined in Wis. Stat. § 961.01(4), and all mood-altering or psychoactive substances, except when prescribed, dispensed or administered by a practitioner for a legitimate medical condition. Respondent shall disclose Respondent's drug and alcohol history and the existence and nature of this Order to the practitioner prior to the practitioner ordering the controlled substance. Respondent shall at the time the controlled substance is ordered immediately sign a release in compliance with state and federal laws authorizing the practitioner to discuss Respondent's treatment with, and provide copies of treatment records to, Treater and the Board or its designee.
- C.10. Respondent shall abstain from all use of over-the-counter medications or other substances which may mask consumption of controlled substances or of alcohol, create false positive screening results, or interfere with Respondent's treatment and rehabilitation.
- C.11. Within 24 hours of ingestion or administration, Respondent shall report to Treater and the Department Monitor all medications and drugs, over-the-counter or prescription, taken by Respondent, shall identify the person or persons who prescribed, dispensed, administered or ordered said medications or drugs, and shall provide the Department Monitor with a copy of the prescription. If Respondent has not provided a release as required by C.9 above, within 24 hours of a request by Treater or the Board or its designee, Respondent shall provide releases in compliance with state and federal laws. The releases shall authorize the person who prescribed, dispensed, administered or ordered the medication to discuss Respondent's treatment with, and provide copies of treatment records to, the requester.

#### Drug and Alcohol Screens

- C.12. Respondent shall continue in a drug and alcohol monitoring program which is approved by the Department pursuant to Wis. Adm. Code § RL 7.11 ("Approved Program"). A list of Approved Programs is available from the Department Monitor.
- C.13. At the time Respondent enrolls in the Approved Program, Respondent shall review all of the rules and procedures made available by the Approved Program. Failure to comply with all requirements for participation in drug and alcohol monitoring established by the Approved Program – including any positive test for any controlled substance or alcohol – is a substantial violation of this Order. The requirements shall include:
- (a) Contact with the Approved Program as directed on a daily basis, including vacations, weekends and holidays.
  - (b) Production of a urine specimen at a collection site designated by the Approved Program within five (5) hours of notification of a test.
- C.14. The Approved Program shall require the testing of urine specimens at a frequency of not less than **48 times per year**, for the first year of this Order. After the first year, the frequency may be reduced only upon a determination by the Board or its designee after receiving a petition for modification as required by D.4., below.
- C.15. The Department Monitor, Board or Board designee shall determine the tests to be performed upon the specimens. If any urine, blood or hair specimen is positive or suspected positive for any controlled substances or alcohol, Respondent shall promptly submit to additional tests or examinations as the Treater or the Board or its designee shall determine to be appropriate to clarify or confirm the positive or suspected positive test results.
- C.16. In addition to any requirement of the Approved Program, the Board or its designee may require Respondent to do any or all of the following: (a) submit additional urine specimens, (b) submit blood, hair or breath specimens, (c) furnish any specimen in a directly witnessed manner.
- C.17. All confirmed positive test results shall be presumed to be valid. Respondent must prove by a preponderance of the evidence an error in collection, testing or other fault in the chain of custody.
- C.18. The Approved Program shall submit information and reports to the Department Monitor in compliance with the requirements of Wis. Adm. Code § RL 7.11.

#### Reporting Required

- C.19. It is the responsibility of Respondent to promptly notify the Department Monitor of any suspected violations of any of the terms and conditions of this Order.
- C.20. Respondent shall provide a copy of this Final Decision and Order and all other subsequent orders immediately to supervisory personnel where Respondent is engaged in the practice of medicine or surgery as defined at Wis. Stat. § 448.01(9).
- C.21. It is Respondent's responsibility to arrange for written reports from his employer or practice partner(s) to be provided to the Department Monitor on a quarterly basis, as directed by the Department Monitor. These reports shall assess Respondent's work

performance, and shall include the number of hours of active practice worked during that quarter.

- C.22. Respondent shall obtain agreement from his employer or practice partner(s) to monitor Respondent's access to and accountability for handling of controlled substances and other abusable prescription drugs in order to reasonably detect loss, diversion, tampering, or discrepancy relating to controlled substances and other abusable prescription drugs. Respondent's supervisor shall include in the quarterly reports a description of Respondent's access to controlled substances and other abusable drugs and the monitoring thereof. Any loss, diversion, tampering, or discrepancy shall be immediately reported to the Board; this includes any sample medication.
- C.23. Respondent shall arrange for agreement by his employer or practice partner(s) to immediately report to the Board and to the Treater any conduct or condition of Respondent that may constitute a violation of this Order or a danger to the public.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Department Monitor

- D.1. Any requests, petitions, reports and other information required by this Order shall be mailed, e-mailed, faxed or delivered to:

Department Monitor  
Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing  
Division of Enforcement  
1400 East Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 8935  
Madison, WI 53708-8935  
Fax: (608) 266-2264  
Telephone: (608) 267-3817

### Required Reporting by Respondent

- D.2. Respondent is responsible for compliance with all of the terms and conditions of this Order, including the timely submission of reports by others. Respondent shall promptly notify the Department Monitor of any failures of the Treater, treatment facility, Approved Program or collection sites to conform to the terms and conditions of this Order. Respondent shall promptly notify the Department Monitor of any violations of any of the terms and conditions of this Order by Respondent. Additionally, every three (3) months, the Respondent shall notify the Department Monitor of the Respondent's compliance with the terms and conditions of the Order, and shall provide the Department Monitor with a current address and home telephone number.
- D.3. Respondent shall report to the Board any change of employment status, residence, address or telephone number within five (5) days of the date of a change.

Change of Treater or Approved Program by Board

- D.4. If the Board or its designee determines the Treater or Approved Program has performed inadequately or has failed to satisfy the terms and conditions of this Order, the Board or its designee may direct that Respondent continue treatment and rehabilitation under the direction of another Treater or Approved Program.

Petitions for Modification of Limitations or Termination of Order

- D.5. Respondent may petition the Board for modification of the terms of this Order or termination, however, no such petition for modification shall occur earlier than one year from the date of this Order, no such petition shall be made any earlier than three months from the date the Board has acted on the last such petition, and no such petition for termination shall occur other than in compliance with paragraph A.3. Any such petition for modification shall be accompanied by a written recommendation from Respondent's Treater expressly supporting the specific modifications sought. Denial of a petition in whole or in part shall not be considered a denial of a license within the meaning of Wis. Stat. § 227.01(3)(a), and Respondent shall not have a right to any further hearings or proceedings on the denial.

Costs of Compliance

- D.6. Respondent shall be responsible for all costs and expenses incurred in conjunction with the monitoring, screening, supervision and any other expenses associated with compliance with the terms of this Order. Being dropped from a program for non-payment is a violation of this Order.

Costs of Proceeding

- D.7. Respondent shall pay costs of \$1,275.00 to the Department of Regulation and Licensing, within ninety (90) days of this Order. In the event Respondent fails to timely submit full payment of costs, Respondent's license SHALL BE SUSPENDED, without further notice or hearing, until Respondent has paid them in full, together with any accrued interest.

Additional Discipline

- D.8. In addition to any other action authorized by this Order or law, violation of any term of this Order may be the basis for a separate disciplinary action pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 448.02(3).

Wisconsin Medical Examining Board

By: \_\_\_\_\_

A Member of the Board

Date