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10 **BEFORE THE**
MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
11 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
12

13 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2017-038145

14 Abigail Mary Stanton, M.D.
15 1560 East Chevy Chase Drive, Suite 130
Glendale, CA 91206

A C C U S A T I O N

16 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
17 No. G 62736,

Respondent.

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20 **PARTIES**

21 1. William Prasifka (Complainant) brings this Accusation solely in his official capacity
22 as the Executive Director of the Medical Board of California, Department of Consumer Affairs
23 (Board).

24 2. On or about April 25, 1988, the Medical Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's
25 Certificate Number G 62736 to Abigail Mary Stanton, M.D. (Respondent). The Physician's and
26 Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought
27 herein and will expire on October 31, 2021, unless renewed:

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JURISDICTION

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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 2227 of the Code provides that a licensee who is found guilty under the Medical Practice Act may have his or her license revoked, suspended for a period not to exceed one year, placed on probation and required to pay the costs of probation monitoring, or such other action taken in relation to discipline as the Board deems proper.

5. Section 2234 of the Code, states:

The board shall take action against any licensee who is charged with unprofessional conduct. In addition to other provisions of this article, unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) Violating or attempting to violate, directly or indirectly, assisting in or abetting the violation of, or conspiring to violate any provision of this chapter.

(b) Gross negligence.

(c) Repeated negligent acts. To be repeated, there must be two or more negligent acts or omissions. An initial negligent act or omission followed by a separate and distinct departure from the applicable standard of care shall constitute repeated negligent acts.

(1) An initial negligent diagnosis followed by an act or omission medically appropriate for that negligent diagnosis of the patient shall constitute a single negligent act.

(2) When the standard of care requires a change in the diagnosis, act, or omission that constitutes the negligent act described in paragraph (1), including, but not limited to, a reevaluation of the diagnosis or a change in treatment, and the licensee's conduct departs from the applicable standard of care, each departure constitutes a separate and distinct breach of the standard of care.

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6. Section 2266 of the Code states:

The failure of a physician and surgeon to maintain adequate and accurate records relating to the provision of services to their patients constitutes unprofessional conduct.

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1 **DEFINITIONS**

2 7. Zoloft (sertraline) is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) used to treat
3 depression, panic attacks, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, social
4 anxiety disorder, and a severe form of premenstrual syndrome.

5 8. Valium (diazepam) is a benzodiazepine used to treat anxiety, alcohol withdrawal,
6 and seizures. It is also used to relieve muscle spasms and to provide sedation before medical
7 procedures.

8 9. Trazadone is a SSRI used to treat major depressive disorder and may also be used to
9 decrease anxiety and insomnia related to depression.

10 **FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE**

11 **(Gross Negligence)**

12 10. Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under section 2234, subdivision (b), in
13 that she was grossly negligent in the care and treatment of Patient 1.¹ The circumstances are as
14 follows:

15 11. Respondent is a practicing psychiatrist.

16 12. Patient 1, a 36-year-old male, first presented to Respondent on May 9, 2016 for
17 generalized anxiety disorder and social anxiety disorder. Patient 1 had a history of passive
18 suicidal ideation and a history of "cutting" at the age of 18. Respondent's records reflect that
19 Patient 1 had stopped drinking.

20 13. Respondent suggested Zoloft to treat the anxiety, but Patient 1 declined the Zoloft and
21 indicated he preferred to take Valium for "severe" anxiety on an intermittent basis.

22 14. Respondent prescribed Valium, 5 mg, 20 pills, with one refill. Respondent instructed
23 Patient 1 to take one-half pill to start as a "test dose." She referred Patient 1 to the Anxiety and
24 Depression Association of America and discussed cognitive behavioral therapy for anxiety
25 disorders.

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28 ¹ The Patient is referred to by number to protect his privacy. Respondent is aware of the
identity of Patient 1.

1 15. Respondent saw Patient 1 in follow-up on June 21, 2016. Patient 1 reported that the
2 Valium was working. He had been taking it three days per week. He was provided another
3 Valium prescription at the same dose and quantity as on May 9, 2016, with two refills.

4 16. Respondent saw Patient 1 in follow-up on August 16, 2016, and November 15, 2016.
5 Respondent remained stable on the Valium. On each occasion, Respondent prescribed Valium, 5
6 mg, 20 pills, with three refills, to be taken as needed.

7 17. Respondent again saw Patient 1 on March 14, 2017. She increased the amount of
8 Valium in each prescription from 20 pills to 30 pills, with three refills, to be taken as needed for
9 "panic." She noted that Patient 1 was doing well and using Valium responsibly. Respondent's
10 records contain no explanation for the increase in the amount of Valium.

11 18. Respondent saw Patient 1 on July 18, 2017. Respondent reported increased use of
12 Valium from three times a week to daily as a result of "marital issues." Respondent noted she
13 would try to decrease Valium over the next two months and reevaluate use of an SSRI. She
14 advised Patient 1 to abstain from alcohol use. She increased the Valium prescription to 5 mg, 45
15 pills, with one refill.

16 19. Patient 1's final visit with Respondent was on September 12, 2017. At that time,
17 Respondent noted that she was concerned that Patient 1 was taking Valium every day. The
18 Valium was wearing off in that the dose did not last very long. Respondent believed Patient 1 had
19 something more than an intermittent anxiety problem, and she determined that an SSRI was
20 needed. Respondent's records document that Patient 1 had recently separated from his wife,
21 which caused him increased anxiety and sorrow. She documented no suicidal ideation.
22 Respondent discontinued Valium. She did not discuss, and/or document a discussion of, possible
23 withdrawal symptoms. She prescribed Zoloft, 25 mg, 30 pills, with instructions to take one-half
24 pill per day to reduce side effects. She also prescribed trazodone, 50 mg, 30 pills with
25 instructions to take one pill at bedtime as needed for insomnia. Respondent provided two refills
26 of each prescription.

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1 30. As set forth in Paragraphs 19 and 20, Respondent failed to document a follow-up visit
2 to address the trial of Zoloft before the three-month prescription of Zoloft would have run out.

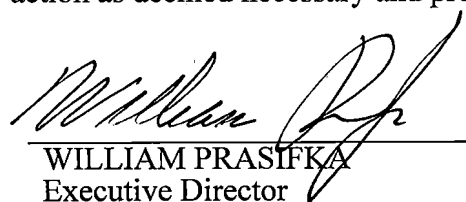
3 31. As set forth in Paragraph 19, Respondent failed to document a discussion with Patient
4 1 about withdrawal symptoms from discontinuing Valium.

5 **PRAYER**

6 WHEREFORE, Complainant requests that a hearing be held on the matters herein alleged,
7 and that following the hearing, the Medical Board of California issue a decision:

- 8 1. Revoking or suspending Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate Number G 62736,
9 issued to Respondent Abigail Mary Stanton, M.D.;
- 10 2. Revoking, suspending or denying approval of Abigail Mary Stanton M.D.'s authority
11 to supervise physician assistants and advanced practice nurses;
- 12 3. Ordering Abigail Mary Stanton, M.D., if placed on probation, to pay the Board the
13 costs of probation monitoring; and
- 14 4. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.

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16 DATED: OCT 13 2020



WILLIAM PRASIFKA
Executive Director
Medical Board of California
Department of Consumer Affairs
State of California
Complainant

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