

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE BOARD OF MEDICINE

IN RE: LUANNE RUONA, M.D.
License No.: 0101-022727

CONSENT ORDER

By Order of Summary Suspension, entered May 19, 2004, the Virginia Board of Medicine ("Board") unanimously determined that the continued practice of Luanne Ruona, M.D., constituted a substantial danger to the public health and safety, and the license of Dr. Ruona to practice medicine and surgery in the Commonwealth of Virginia was summarily suspended, simultaneously with the institution of proceedings for a formal administrative hearing in this matter through a Notice of Formal Hearing and Statement of Particulars, dated May 19, 2004.

On October 15, 2004, the Board convened a formal administrative hearing regarding this matter. As a preliminary matter, Ronald B. Keys, J.D., Ph.D., counsel for Dr. Ruona, requested a continuance of this proceeding. After deliberation pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A(7) of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended ("Code"), the Board proffered this Consent Order in lieu of proceeding to a formal administrative hearing.

As evidenced by their signatures affixed below, the Board and Dr. Ruona agree to enter into this Consent Order affecting the license of Dr. Ruona to practice medicine in Virginia.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board adopts the following findings of fact in this matter:

1. Luanne Ruona, M.D., was issued license number 0101-022727 by the Board to practice medicine and surgery on December 4, 1972. Said license was suspended by Order of Summary Suspension of the Board, entered May 19, 2004.

2. Dr. Ruona failed to comply with and complete successfully the terms of her contract with the Virginia Health Practitioners' Intervention Program ("Virginia HPIP"). Specifically, on or about March 12, 2004, Dr. Ruona was dismissed from Virginia HPIP for noncompliance with her contract, after failing to abstain from the consumption of alcohol in or about July 2003, and again in or about February and March 2004.

3. Dr. Ruona failed to notify the Board immediately upon receiving notification of her dismissal from Virginia HPIP, on or about March 12, 2004.

4. As detailed by all previous Orders of the Board regarding Dr. Ruona, Dr. Ruona has an approximate fifteen (15) year history of alcohol dependency and abuse, with multiple attempts at both inpatient and outpatient treatment, and participation in recovery monitoring programs. Most recently, Dr. Ruona participated in a recovery monitoring program with Virginia HPIP, as required by the Order of the Board, entered October 17, 2001 ("Board's Order"). Despite these measures and her previous treatments, Dr. Ruona has been unable to refrain from abusing alcohol. Specifically:

a. In or about July 2003, during a trip to Spain and the Canary Islands, Dr. Ruona relapsed by consuming alcohol. Once returning to the United States, Dr. Ruona failed to contact Virginia HPIP on or about July 31, 2003 and August 1, 2003, to determine whether she needed to submit to a urine drug screen.

b. In or about early August 2003, Dr. Ruona was admitted to Alexandria Hospital, Alexandria, Virginia, for detoxification from alcohol. On or about August 18, 2003, Dr. Ruona was admitted to the Professionals at Risk Treatment Services Program

at Elmhurst Memorial Healthcare, Elmhurst, Illinois. Dr. Ruona was discharged on or about September 26, 2003, with primary diagnoses of dysthymia and alcohol dependence, early full remission. On or about September 30, 2003, Dr. Ruona entered into a modified Recovery Monitoring Contract with Virginia HPIP, in which she agreed to refrain from practicing medicine until approved by Virginia HPIP.

c. On or about February 28, 2004, Dr. Ruona demonstrated poor insight into her behavior and relapsed by consuming punch with alcohol that she prepared for a group of friends. On or about March 3, 2004, Dr. Ruona stopped taking Antabuse because it made her feel “nauseated.” In addition, in or about March 2004, Dr. Ruona began drinking heavily and on or about March 8, 2004, she drank all day. Prior to this relapse, Dr. Ruona saw her psychiatrist on or about February 20, 2004.

d. On or about March 12, 2004, Dr. Ruona was dismissed from Virginia HPIP due to noncompliance with the September 30, 2003 Recovery Monitoring Contract.

5. Dr. Ruona’s license to practice medicine in the State of Maryland was restricted. Specifically, by Order of Reinstatement, Order of Probation, entered by the Maryland State Board of Physician Quality Assurance (“Maryland Board”) on or about January 30, 2002, Dr. Ruona’s license to practice medicine in the State of Maryland was reinstated, and Dr. Ruona was placed on probation to run concurrent with the probationary period imposed by the Virginia Board. The terms of Dr. Ruona’s probation included that she: remain under contract with the MedChi Physician Rehabilitation Program (“PRP”); remain compliant with the terms and conditions of her PRP contract; authorize PRP to notify the Maryland Board of any positive

chemical screens; inform all employers of her contract with PRP; ensure that any employer or supervising physician provide quarterly reports to the Board regarding her work performance; and appear before the Maryland Board to discuss her practice intentions, prior to practicing medicine in the State of Maryland. In addition, on or about December 9, 2003, Dr. Ruona surrendered her license to practice medicine in the State of Maryland. Dr. Ruona indicated that her decision was prompted by information received by the Maryland Board that she had violated her Order of Probation, and to avoid further prosecution by the Maryland Board.

6. Dr. Ruona's license to practice medicine in the District of Columbia was restricted. Specifically, by Consent Order entered by the District of Columbia Board of Medicine ("D.C. Board") on or about March 26, 2002, Dr. Ruona was granted a license to practice medicine in the District of Columbia under certain conditions. These conditions included that Dr. Ruona: comply with all provisions of the Virginia Board's Order; forward copies of all reports required by the Virginia Board's Order to the D.C. Board; and be placed on probation for a period of time commensurate with the probationary period imposed by the Virginia Board.

7. Between May 31, 2004 and September 1, 2004, Dr. Ruona was treated by Dr. Marie Schum-Brady, Arlington, Virginia, in an effort to identify underlying metabolic imbalances that might contribute to Dr. Ruona's alcoholism and relapses. As part of the treatment, Dr. Ruona received 23 nutritional IV infusions from June 14, 2004 to September 1, 2004, to replace Dr. Ruona's nutritional deficiencies. The IVs consisted of basic vitamins, minerals and amino acids. According to Dr. Schum-Brady, over the course of the IV nutritional

infusions, Dr. Ruona reported feeling better, being able to think more clearly and feeling more grounded. At some point during the treatment, Dr. Ruona began Antabuse at the recommendation of one of her psychiatrists. According to Dr. Schum-Brady, she saw Dr. Ruona three times per week and had no indication that Dr. Ruona had been drinking. Dr. Schum-Brady could not say whether stabilizing Dr. Ruona physically would preclude her from relapsing into alcoholism again, and only time would tell whether removing some or all of the physical stresses would improve her chances of consistent sobriety.

8. Dr. Ruona entered INOVA's Comprehensive Addition Treatment Services ("CATS") Outpatient Program on May 28, 2004. According to Tom Walker, Addition Counselor I, INOVA CATS Outpatient Program, Dr. Ruona attended and completed the Relapse Prevention Phase of treatment and is currently in the Sober Living Phase of outpatient treatment. Dr. Ruona reports regular 12 step meeting attendance and daily contact with her AA sponsor. According to Mr. Walker, all urinalysis and breathalyzer screenings on Dr. Ruona have been negative through September 21, 2004. Dr. Ruona's current treatment is focused on the development of stress management skills, improved sober support system and the development of a long-term relapse prevention plan.

9. Dr. Ruona was admitted to Alexandria Hospital on October 8, 2004 to detoxify following an alcohol relapse, subsequent to September 21, 2004. Dr. Ruona was discharged from Alexandria Hospital on October 11, 2004.

10. By letter, dated October 14, 2004, The William J. Farley Center, Williamsburg, Virginia ("Farley Center"), has agreed to admit Dr. Ruona to its 90-day program that

specializes in the treatment of health care providers. Dr. Ruona is currently scheduled to be admitted to the Farley Center program on October 20, 2004.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Finding of Fact 2 constitutes a violation of Term 1 of the Board's Order.
2. Finding of Fact 3 constitutes a violation of Term 2 of the Board's Order.
3. Finding of Fact 4 constitutes a violation of Sections 54.1-2915(2), (5) and (3) [formerly Sections 54.1-2915.A (2), (5) and (3)], as further defined in Section 54.1-2914.A(9) of the Code.
4. Finding of Fact 5 constitutes a violation of Section 54.1-2915(6) [formerly Section 54.1-2915.A(6)] of the Code.
5. Finding of Fact 6 constitutes a violation of Section 54.1-2915(6) [formerly Section 54.1-2915.A(6)] of the Code.

CONSENT

I, Luanne Ruona, M.D., by affixing my signature hereto, acknowledge that:

1. I have been advised specifically to seek the advice of counsel prior to signing this document and am represented by Ronald B. Keys, J.D., Ph.D., and Rhonda L. Earhart, Esquire;
2. I am fully aware that without my consent, no legal action can be taken against me, except pursuant to the Virginia Administrative Process Act, § 2.2-4000.A et seq. of the Code of Virginia;
3. I have the following rights, among others:
 - a. the right to a formal administrative hearing before the Board;

- b. the right to representation by counsel; and
 - c. the right to cross-examine witnesses against me.
- 4. I waive all rights to a formal administrative hearing;
 - 5. I admit the truth of the above Findings of Fact;
 - 6. I agree that I will not petition the Board for reinstatement of my license until such time as I have received an evaluation from my treating practitioner(s) stating that I am competent to return to the practice of medicine and have documented an acceptable period of sobriety of not less than eighteen (18) months; and
 - 7. I consent to the following Order affecting my license to practice medicine and surgery in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

ORDER

WHEREFORE, based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and with the express consent of the licensee, Luanne Ruona, M.D., hereby agrees to the VOLUNTARY SURRENDER her license to practice medicine and surgery in the Commonwealth of Virginia, for not less than eighteen (18) months.

Pursuant to Section 54.1-2920 of the Code, upon entry of this Consent Order, Dr. Ruona shall forthwith give notice, by certified mail, of the voluntary surrender of her license to practice medicine and surgery to all patients to whom she is currently providing services. A copy of this notice shall be provided to the Board when sent to patients. Dr. Ruona shall cooperate with other practitioners to ensure continuation of treatment in conformity with the wishes of the patient. Dr. Ruona shall also notify any hospitals or other facilities where she is

currently granted privileges, and any health insurance companies, health insurance administrators or health maintenance organization currently reimbursing her for any of the healing arts.

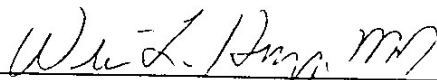
Further, within five (5) days of entry of this Consent Order, Dr. Ruona shall:

1. Return her current license to the Board office;
2. Update her Virginia Practitioner Profile regarding her primary practice address and any other appropriate section, with the exception of the Virginia Notices and Orders section;
3. Surrender her Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”) certificate and DEA 222 Schedule II order forms to the DEA and provide a copy of this surrender notification to the Board;
4. Submit written notification to any and all drug wholesalers or pharmacies that she has ordered from, or had an account with for the past five (5) years, that she has surrendered her DEA license and request that the account be closed, a copy of which shall be provided to the Board; and
5. Properly dispose of all Schedule II-VI controlled substances, including physician’s samples, remaining in the practice.

Upon entry of this Consent Order, the license of Luanne Ruona, M.D., will be recorded as surrendered and no longer current.

Pursuant to Section 54.1-2400.2(F) of the Code, the signed original of this Consent Order shall remain in the custody of the Department of Health Professions as a public record and shall be made available for public inspection and copying upon request.

FOR THE BOARD:



William L. Harp, M.D.
Executive Director
Virginia Board of Medicine

10/15/04

ENTERED

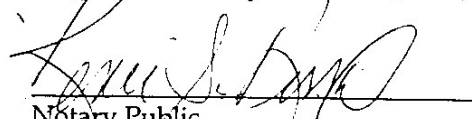
SEEN AND AGREED TO:



LUANNE RUONA, M.D.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF HENRICO, TO WIT:

Subscribed and sworn to before me, the undersigned Notary Public, in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia, at large, this 15th day of October, 2004, by Luanne Ruona, M.D.



Notary Public

My commission expires: October 31, 2006