

**BEFORE THE
MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

In the Matter of the Accusation)	
Against:)	
)	
)	
Alphonso Brenell Benton, M.D.)	File No. 800-2014-002390
)	
Physician's and Surgeon's)	
Certificate No. A 72741)	
)	
Respondent)	
_____)	

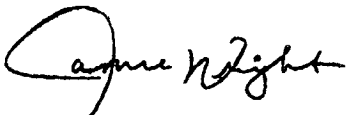
DECISION

The attached Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order is hereby adopted as the Decision and Order of the Medical Board of California, Department of Consumer Affairs, State of California.

This Decision shall become effective at 5:00 p.m. on February 3, 2017.

IT IS SO ORDERED January 5, 2017.

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

By: 

**Jamie Wright, J.D., Chair
Panel A**

1 KAMALA D. HARRIS
Attorney General of California
2 JUDITH T. ALVARADO
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
3 RANDALL R. MURPHY
Deputy Attorney General
4 State Bar No. 165851
California Department of Justice
5 300 South Spring Street, Suite 1702
Los Angeles, California 90013
6 Telephone: (213) 897-2493
Facsimile: (213) 897-9395
7 *Attorneys for Complainant*

8 **BEFORE THE**
MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
9 **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
10 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

11 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:
12 ALPHONSO B. BENTON, M.D.
15944 Los Serranos Country Club Drive, Suite
13 110
Chinio Hills, CA 97090,
14 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate No.
15 A72741,
16 Respondent.

Case No. 800-2014-002390

OAH Case No. 2016030692

**STIPULATED SETTLEMENT AND
DISCIPLINARY ORDER**

17
18 IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED AND AGREED by and between the parties to the above-
19 entitled proceedings that the following matters are true:
20

21 PARTIES

22 1. Kimberly Kirchmeyer (Complainant) is the Executive Director of the Medical Board
23 of California (Board). She brought this action solely in her official capacity and is represented in
24 this matter by Kamala D. Harris, Attorney General of the State of California, by Randall R.
25 Murphy, Deputy Attorney General.

26 2. Respondent Alphonso B. Benton, M.D. (Respondent) is represented in this
27 proceeding by attorney Peter R. Osinoff, Esq., of Bonne Bridges Mueller O'Keefe & Nichols,
28 whose address is: 3699 Wilshire Blvd., 10th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90010.

1 the Board may, without further notice or formal proceeding, issue and enter the following
2 Disciplinary Order:

3 **DISCIPLINARY ORDER**

4 **A. PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

5 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Respondent Alphonso B. Benton, M.D., Physician's and
6 Surgeon's Certificate No. A72741, shall be and is hereby Publicly Reprimanded pursuant to
7 California Business and Professions Code section 2227, subdivision (a)(4). This Public
8 Reprimand is issued in connection with Respondent's care and treatment of one patient, as set
9 forth in Accusation No. 800-2014-002390, and is as follows:

10 Respondent, Alphonso Benton, M.D., treated patient J.G., on January 10, 2012, for
11 complications of a urinary tract infection. Respondent's notes did not adequately support his
12 choice of antibiotics nor his decision to discharge the patient to a convalescent care center later
13 that day. This has been determined to constitute a violation of Business and Professions Code
14 sections 2234 and 2266.

15 16. MEDICAL RECORD KEEPING COURSE. Within 60 calendar days of the
16 effective date of this Decision, Respondent shall enroll in a course in medical record keeping
17 equivalent to the Medical Record Keeping Course offered by the Physician Assessment and
18 Clinical Education Program, University of California, San Diego School of Medicine (Program),
19 approved in advance by the Board or its designee. Respondent shall provide the program with
20 any information and documents that the Program may deem pertinent. Respondent shall
21 participate in and successfully complete the classroom component of the course not later than six
22 (6) months after Respondent's initial enrollment. Respondent shall successfully complete any
23 other component of the course within one (1) year of enrollment. The medical record keeping
24 course shall be at Respondent's expense and shall be in addition to the Continuing Medical
25 Education (CME) requirements for renewal of licensure. It is understood that the medical record
26 keeping component of the Physician Assessment and Clinical Education Program required in
27 paragraph 17, below, shall be adequate to fulfill this requirement.

28 A medical record keeping course taken after the acts that gave rise to the charges in the

1 Accusation, but prior to the effective date of the Decision may, in the sole discretion of the Board
2 or its designee, be accepted towards the fulfillment of this condition if the course would have
3 been approved by the Board or its designee had the course been taken after the effective date of
4 this Decision.

5 Respondent shall submit a certification of successful completion to the Board or its
6 designee not later than 15 calendar days after successfully completing the course, or not later than
7 15 calendar days after the effective date of the Decision, whichever is later.

8 17. CLINICAL TRAINING PROGRAM. Within 60 calendar days of the effective
9 date of this Decision, Respondent shall enroll in a clinical training or educational program
10 equivalent to the Physician Assessment and Clinical Education Program (PACE) offered at the
11 University of California - San Diego School of Medicine (“Program”). Respondent shall
12 successfully complete the Program not later than six (6) months after Respondent’s initial
13 enrollment unless the Board or its designee agrees in writing to an extension of that time.

14 The Program shall consist of a Comprehensive Assessment program comprised of a two-
15 day assessment of Respondent’s physical and mental health; basic clinical and communication
16 skills common to all clinicians; and medical knowledge, skill and judgment pertaining to
17 Respondent’s area of practice in which Respondent was alleged to be deficient, and at minimum,
18 a 40 hour program of clinical education in the area of practice in which Respondent was alleged
19 to be deficient and which takes into account data obtained from the assessment, Decision(s),
20 Accusation(s), and any other information that the Board or its designee deems relevant.
21 Respondent shall pay all expenses associated with the clinical training program.

22 Based on Respondent’s performance and test results in the assessment and clinical
23 education, the Program will advise the Board or its designee of its recommendation(s) for the
24 scope and length of any additional educational or clinical training, treatment for any medical
25 condition, treatment for any psychological condition, or anything else affecting Respondent’s
26 practice of medicine. Respondent shall comply with Program recommendations.

27 At the completion of any additional educational or clinical training, Respondent shall
28 submit to and pass an examination. Determination as to whether Respondent successfully

1 completed the examination or successfully completed the program is solely within the program's
2 jurisdiction.

3 If Respondent fails to enroll, participate in, or successfully complete the clinical training
4 program within the designated time period, Respondent shall receive a notification from the
5 Board or its designee to cease the practice of medicine within three (3) calendar days after being
6 so notified. The Respondent shall not resume the practice of medicine until enrollment or
7 participation in the outstanding portions of the clinical training program have been completed. If
8 the Respondent did not successfully complete the clinical training program, the Respondent shall
9 not resume the practice of medicine until a final decision has been rendered on the accusation
10 and/or a petition to revoke probation. The cessation of practice shall not apply to the reduction of
11 the probationary time period.

12 Within 60 days after Respondent has successfully completed the clinical training program,
13 Respondent shall participate in a professional enhancement program equivalent to the one offered
14 by the Physician Assessment and Clinical Education Program at the University of California, San
15 Diego School of Medicine, which shall include quarterly chart review, semi-annual practice
16 assessment, and semi-annual review of professional growth and education. Respondent shall
17 participate in the professional enhancement program at Respondent's expense during the term of
18 probation, or until the Board or its designee determines that further participation is no longer
19 necessary. Failure to fulfill this term and condition shall be considered unprofessional conduct
20 under Business and Professions Code section 2234, subdivision (e).

21 This condition shall apply to any change(s) in hospitals, other facilities or insurance carrier.

22 18. OBEY ALL LAWS. Respondent shall obey all federal, state and local laws, all
23 rules governing the practice of medicine in California and remain in full compliance with any
24 court ordered criminal probation, payments, and other orders.

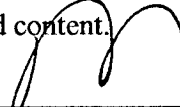
25 ACCEPTANCE

26 I have carefully read the above Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order and have fully
27 discussed it with my attorney, Peter R. Osinoff, Esq.. I understand the stipulation and the effect it
28 will have on my Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate. I enter into this Stipulated Settlement and

1 Disciplinary Order voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently, and agree to be bound by the
2 Decision and Order of the Medical Board of California.


3
4 DATED: 11-4-16 
5 ALPHONSO B. BENTON, M.D.
Respondent

6 I have read and fully discussed with Respondent ALPHONSO B. BENTON, M.D. the
7 terms and conditions and other matters contained in the above Stipulated Settlement and
8 Disciplinary Order. I approve its form and content.

9 DATED: 11/7/16 
10 PETER R. OSINOFF, ESQ.
Attorney for Respondent

11 ENDORSEMENT

12 The foregoing Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order is hereby respectfully
13 submitted for consideration by the Medical Board of California.

14 Dated: Respectfully submitted,
15
16 KAMALA D. HARRIS
17 Attorney General of California
18 JUDITH T. ALVARADO
19 Supervising Deputy Attorney General
20
21 
22 RANDALL R. MURPHY
23 Deputy Attorney General
24 *Attorneys for Complainant*

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Exhibit A

Accusation No. 800-2014-002390

1 KAMALA D. HARRIS
Attorney General of California
2 ROBERT MCKIM BELL
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
3 RANDALL R. MURPHY
Deputy Attorney General
4 State Bar No. 165851
California Department of Justice
5 300 South Spring Street, Suite 1702
Los Angeles, California 90013
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8 **BEFORE THE**
9 **MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA**
10 **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
11 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

11 In the Matter of the Accusation Against:

Case No. 800-2014-002390

12 Alphonso B. Benton, M.D.
15944 Los Serranos Country Club Drive,
13 Suite 110
Chino Hills, California 91709-3993

A C C U S A T I O N

14 Physician's and Surgeon's Certificate
15 No. A72741,

16 Respondent.

17
18 Complainant alleges:

19 **PARTIES**

20 1. Kimberly Kirchmeyer ("Complainant") brings this Accusation solely in her official
21 capacity as the Executive Director of the Medical Board of California, Department of Consumer
22 Affairs ("Board").

23 2. On or about August 3, 2000, the Medical Board issued Physician's and Surgeon's
24 Certificate Number A72741 to Alphonso B. Benton, M.D. ("Respondent"). The Physician's and
25 Surgeon's Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought
26 herein and will expire on August 31, 2016, unless renewed.

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2 **JURISDICTION**

3 3. This Accusation is brought before the Board under the authority of the following
4 laws. All section references are to the Business and Professions Code (“Code”) unless otherwise
5 indicated.

6 4. The Medical Practice Act (“Act”) is codified at sections 2000-2521 of the Business
7 and Professions Code.

8 5. Pursuant to Code section 2001.1, the Board’s highest priority is public protection.

9 6. Section 2004 of the Code states:

10 “The board shall have the responsibility for the following:

11 “(a) The enforcement of the disciplinary and criminal provisions of the Medical Practice
12 Act.

13 “(b) The administration and hearing of disciplinary actions.

14 “(c) Carrying out disciplinary actions appropriate to findings made by a panel or an
15 administrative law judge.

16 “(d) Suspending, revoking, or otherwise limiting certificates after the conclusion of
17 disciplinary actions.

18 “(e) Reviewing the quality of medical practice carried out by physician and surgeon
19 certificate holders under the jurisdiction of the board.

20 “. . .”

21 7. Code section 2227, subdivision (a), provides as follows:

22 “(a) A licensee whose matter has been heard by an administrative law judge of the Medical
23 Quality Hearing Panel as designated in Section 11371 of the Government Code, or whose default
24 has been entered, and who is found guilty, or who has entered into a stipulation for disciplinary
25 action with the board, may, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter:

26 “(1) Have his or her license revoked upon order of the board.

27 “(2) Have his or her right to practice suspended for a period not to exceed one year
28 upon order of the board.

1 “(3) Be placed on probation and be required to pay the costs of probation monitoring
2 upon order of the board.

3 “(4) Be publicly reprimanded by the board. The public reprimand may include a
4 requirement that the licensee complete relevant educational courses approved by the board.

5 “(5) Have any other action taken in relation to discipline as part of an order of
6 probation, as the board or an administrative law judge may deem proper.

7 “(b) Any matter heard pursuant to subdivision (a), except for warning letters, medical
8 review or advisory conferences, professional competency examinations, continuing education
9 activities, and cost reimbursement associated therewith that are agreed to with the board and
10 successfully completed by the licensee, or other matters made confidential or privileged by
11 existing law, is deemed public, and shall be made available to the public by the board pursuant to
12 Section 803.1.”

13 8. Section 2234 of the Code, states:

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

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

19 "(b) Gross negligence.

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

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

25 "(2) When the standard of care requires a change in the diagnosis, act, or omission
26 that constitutes the negligent act described in paragraph (1), including, but not limited to, a
27 reevaluation of the diagnosis or a change in treatment, and the licensee's conduct departs from the
28

1 applicable standard of care, each departure constitutes a separate and distinct breach of the
2 standard of care.

3 "(d) Incompetence.

4 "(e) The commission of any act involving dishonesty or corruption which is substantially
5 related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a physician and surgeon.

6 "(f) Any action or conduct which would have warranted the denial of a certificate.

7 "(g) The practice of medicine from this state into another state or country without meeting
8 the legal requirements of that state or country for the practice of medicine. Section 2314 shall not
9 apply to this subdivision. This subdivision shall become operative upon the implementation of
10 the proposed registration program described in Section 2052.5.

11 "(h) The repeated failure by a certificate holder, in the absence of good cause, to attend and
12 participate in an interview by the board. This subdivision shall only apply to a certificate holder
13 who is the subject of an investigation by the board."

14 9. Section 2266 of the Code states: "The failure of a physician and surgeon to maintain
15 adequate and accurate records relating to the provision of services to their patients constitutes
16 unprofessional conduct."

17 FACTS

18 **PATIENT J.G.**

19 10. On or about December 22, 2011, J.G. was transported to the Emergency Room (ER)
20 at Corona Regional Medical Center (CRMC) after suffering from vertigo. While at CRMC, J.G.
21 was having trouble urinating and was told he had a kidney infection. After being treated,
22 Respondent recommended that J.G. be transferred to Vista Cove Care Center (VCCC), a skilled
23 nursing facility, for rehabilitation.

24 11. At CRMC Respondent diagnosed the patient with an altered level of consciousness
25 secondary to urinary tract infection and severe cognitive impairment. The records show that J.G.
26 met the criteria for the diagnosis of sepsis due to urinary tract infection and showed ongoing
27 unstable vital signs and ongoing alterations of his level of consciousness compared to baseline
28 data.

1 12. J.G. was treated at VCCC for five days and was then discharged and sent home on
2 December 27, 2011.

3 13. On or about January 9, 2012, J.G. presented to the ER at CRMC with a fever of 102.
4 J.G. was admitted and stayed at CRMC until January 10, 2012.

5 14. At CRMC J.G was diagnosed with generalized weakness, an alteration of his baseline
6 level of consciousness, a history of a fever to 102 (although not well documented), an elevated
7 White Blood Count, and pyuria. While in the ER he became hypotensive and was given 2 liters
8 of IV fluids.

9 15. J.G. remained hypotensive after the initial 2 liters of IV fluids, but was not provided
10 additional fluids and/or presser agents intravenously.

11 16. J.G. met the criteria for the diagnosis of sepsis at the time of his admission to CRMC
12 because elderly patients are sometimes unable to mount a significant temperature elevation even
13 in the face of serious infections. However, the records reflect that Respondent did not consider
14 sepsis despite having a hypotensive, altered patient with an identifiable source of infection even
15 without a significant fever.

16 17. Respondent brought J.G. into the hospital as an outpatient and admitted the patient to
17 an unmonitored floor of the hospital and did not order monitoring.

18 18. Respondent ordered broad spectrum antibiotics in the form of Ceftriaxone and
19 Ciprofloxacin IV (initially an IV was ordered but the order was later changed to an oral dosage).
20 No other orders were given.

21 19. Respondent did not order broad spectrum antibiotics with coverage for gram positive
22 and gram negative bacteria with specific coverage for methicillin-resistant staph aureus.
23 Respondent's notes reflect that no consideration was given for coverage for unusual bacteria that
24 may be contracted in a healthcare setting, despite J.G.'s having been at a skilled nursing facility
25 10 days prior on Respondent's orders. Respondent did not order appropriate antibiotics,
26 specifically vancomycin and the records do not reflect Respondent altering the antibiotic orders to
27 treat the identified organism following laboratory test results.

28 //

1 20. On January 10, 2012, J.G. was transferred to VCCC, on Respondent's order and over
2 the alleged objections of the patient's family.

3 21. Respondent's medical records indicate that he ordered the transfer to VCCC before he
4 was aware of the specific results of the blood cultures drawn earlier. However, he was aware of
5 all four blood cultures being positive for a gram positive organism before the patient left CRMC,
6 as he noted this on his short stay discharge summary. However, final identification and
7 sensitivities were not reported until January 12, 2012 (after J.G. had been transferred to VCCC,
8 returned to CRMC in cardiac arrest and passed away). No alterations in the choice of antibiotics
9 was made and vancomycin was not ordered, even after the preliminary blood cultures showing
10 gram positives in clusters was known.

11 22. Respondent did not order central venous pressure monitoring or intravenous access in
12 the form of a central line despite indications of sepsis, J.G.'s advanced age and the prior history
13 of the patient.

14 23. At CRMC Respondent ordered IV fluids at a rate of 100 ml/hr. This order was never
15 modified despite blood pressure readings as low as 85/50 and 88/44. There was no charting
16 regarding the hypotension or a treatment plan for it, nor any discussion of why J.G.'s heart rate
17 remained low (in the 50s and 40s) despite being hypotensive.

18 24. Respondent, significantly, did not order a consultation with an Internist or other
19 specialist.

20 25. Respondent did not meet with the spouse or J.G.'s family members.

21 26. Respondent was aware of J.G.'s previous VCCC and CRMC medical records
22 showing that J.G. did not generally run a systolic blood pressure below 100-136. On arrival to
23 the CRMC ER on January 9, 2012, his initial blood pressure was 146/76. However by midnight
24 his blood pressure was 86/48. The ER physician on duty ordered 2 liters of normal saline to be
25 administered "wide open." However, Respondent in his initial admission orders, ordered "normal
26 saline" at 100 ml/h. At the time this order was written J.G.'s blood pressure was recorded as
27 88/44 with a heart rate of 50, after receiving 2 liters of saline.

28 //

1 27. On January 10, 2012, J.G. remained hypotensive, with BP readings as low as 85/50.
2 Diastolic BP was recorded as low as 42. Despite hypotension, the patient also remained
3 bradycardic with a heart rate in the 50s and as low as into the 40s. The ongoing low blood
4 pressure was called to Respondent's attention by other medical professionals who were concerned
5 about J.G.'s stability for transfer to VCCC and the appropriateness of this transfer. Respondent
6 insisted that J.G. was stable for transfer and ordered the transfer to proceed despite ongoing
7 hypotension and bradycardia.

8 28. Although, as noted above, Respondent was aware of J.G.'s preliminary blood cultures
9 before the patient had physically left CRMC and despite the clinical appearance of sepsis,
10 subsequent ongoing hypotension and 4 of 4 blood cultures testing positive for a gram positive
11 organism, no additional action was taken to address the ongoing hypotension.

12 29. Respondent did not ensure that J.G., a patient with sepsis and hypotension, had
13 adequate blood pressure, heart rate readings, oxygenation, respiratory rate and effort, cessation of
14 fever, and stabilization of kidney function before transferring him to a lower level care facility.

15 30. On January 11, 2012, at approximately 2:00 a.m., J.G. was found to be unresponsive,
16 911 was called and J.G. was transported back to CRMC where he arrived in the ER in full cardiac
17 arrest and was not able to be resuscitated.


18 31. Respondent's medical records from January 9-11, 2012, indicate that he did not
19 address several abnormal laboratory test results in J.G., including: (1) low potassium; (2) low
20 calcium; (3) low albumin/nutritional state; (4) elevated b-natriuretic protein; (5) low and
21 declining hemoglobin/hematocrit; (6) abnormal chest x-ray; (7) right bundle branch block on
22 EKG, and; (8) elevated glucose.

23 32. Respondent's medical records from January 9-11, 2012, indicate that he referred to a
24 previous admission from seventeen or eighteen days prior as the basis for abbreviating the
25 History and Physical for this admission. In his Assessment section of the form he classifies this
26 admission as a "readmission." However, he did not document a review of systems (or document
27 that the patient was unable to provide one) or document a new physical examination of the
28 patient.

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- 2. Revoking, suspending or denying approval of his authority to supervise physician assistants, pursuant to section 3527 of the Code;
- 3. Ordering Alphonso B. Benton, M.D., if placed on probation, to pay the Board the costs of probation monitoring; and
- 4. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.

DATED: February 9, 2016


KIMBERLY KIRCHMEYER
Executive Director
Medical Board of California
Department of Consumer Affairs
State of California
Complainant

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