

BEFORE THE ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD

In the Matter of

DAVID A. RUBEN, M.D.

Holder of License No. 11382
For the Practice of Allopathic Medicine
In the State of Arizona.

Case No. MD-17-0179A

**INTERIM FINDINGS OF FACT,
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER
FOR SUMMARY SUSPENSION OF
LICENSE**

INTRODUCTION

The above-captioned matter came for discussion before the Arizona Medical Board ("Board") at its April 5, 2017 regular Board meeting, where it had been placed on the agenda to consider possible summary action against David A. Ruben, M.D. ("Respondent"). Having considered the information in the matter and being fully advised, the Board enters the following Interim Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order for Summary Suspension of License, pending a formal hearing or other Board action. A.R.S. § 32-1451(D).

INTERIM FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Board is the duly constituted authority for the regulation and control of the practice of allopathic medicine in the State of Arizona.
2. Respondent is the holder of license number 11382 for the practice of allopathic medicine in the State of Arizona.
3. Respondent has a prior Board history including:
 - a. A Letter of Reprimand and Probation issued in 2009 for prescribing high dose opioids without proper indication and for failure to timely use objective measures to assess compliance with treatment even after being aware of a patient's cocaine addiction. The 2009 Probation Order required Respondent to complete 15-20 hours of CME in pain management.

1 b. A Decree of Censure, Two Year Probation and One Year Practice
2 Restriction issued in 2010. The 2010 Order prohibited Respondent from
3 prescribing, administering, or dispensing opioids for a year, and required
4 Respondent to complete a prescribing course offered by the Physician Assessment
5 and Clinical Education ("PACE") Program with subsequent chart reviews for a total
6 of two years.

7 c. An Order to complete 15-20 hours of intensive, in-person continuing
8 medical education ("CME") issued in 2012.

9 4. The Board initiated case number MD-17-0179A after receiving notification
10 that Respondent was in violation of the Amended Findings of Facts, Conclusions of Law
11 and Order for a Decree of Censure, Practice Restriction, and Probation issued in Case No.
12 15A-11382-MDX by the Board on February 9, 2016 ("Board Order").

13 5. The Board Order identified numerous deviations from the standard of care
14 with regard to Respondent's controlled substances prescribing practices. Specifically, the
15 Board Order found that with regard to multiple patients, Respondent deviated from the
16 standard of care by failing to perform an appropriate initial assessment to determine if
17 opioid treatment was necessary, continuing to prescribe opioid medication without proper
18 indications, escalating opioid and benzodiazepine medications without proper indications,
19 and by failing to properly respond to aberrant behavior when a patient so presented.

20 6. The Board Order also found actual and potential patient harm in that
21 Respondent's conduct perpetuated addiction and/or diversion, exposed patients to the
22 medical risks inherent with long-term opioid use absent objective pathology to warrant
23 such treatment and placed patients at risk for drug seeking, abuse, addiction, and/or
24 diversion.

1 7. The Board Order included a practice restriction prohibiting Respondent from
2 prescribing, administering or dispensing any schedule II controlled substances for a period
3 of two years.

4 8. Between September, 19, 2016 and March 16, 2017, Respondent wrote a
5 total of 25 prescriptions for schedule II controlled substances to 11 different patients. The
6 prescriptions included Percocet (oxycodone/acetaminophen), Norco
7 (hydrocodone/acetaminophen) and one prescription for Oxycodone.

8 9. On March 1, 2017, Respondent self-reported his prescription of Oxycodone
9 written on February 23, 2017 in violation of the Board Order. Respondent stated that this
10 prescription was issued in error.

11 10. During an investigational interview on March 24, 2017, Respondent stated
12 that at the time he prescribed Norco and Percocet to his patients, he was unaware that
13 these medications were classified as schedule II.

14 11. During the Board's consideration of the above captioned matter on April 5,
15 2017, Respondent again stated that he was unaware that the medications he was
16 prescribing were schedule II medications. One Board member commented that part of the
17 Board's role is to ensure that licensed physicians demonstrate competency in the practice
18 of medicine, and that Respondent's admission that he lacked awareness regarding the
19 schedule of medications he prescribed points to a significant gap in knowledge. The
20 Board member noted that these medications are highly controlled by the DEA and that
21 these are dangerous medications that need to be prescribed by a physician with current
22 knowledge. This gave the Board member great concerns about Respondent's ability to
23 follow the direction of the Board and be effectively regulated. Based on the evidence
24 presented, the Board voted unanimously to summarily suspend Respondent's license.

1 **INTERIM CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

2 1. The Board possesses jurisdiction over the subject matter hereof and over
3 Respondent.

4 2. The conduct and circumstances described above constitute unprofessional conduct
5 pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1401(27)(r) ("Violating a formal order, probation, consent
6 agreement or stipulation issued or entered into by the board or its executive director under
7 the provisions of this chapter.").

8 3. Based on the foregoing Interim Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the public
9 health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action. A.R.S. § 32-1451(D).

10
11 **ORDER**

12 Based on the foregoing Interim Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, set forth
13 above,

14 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

15 1. Respondent's license to practice allopathic medicine in the State of Arizona,
16 License No. 11382, is summarily suspended. Respondent is prohibited from practicing
17 medicine in the State of Arizona and is prohibited from prescribing any form of treatment
18 including prescription medications or injections of any kind.

19 2. The Interim Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law constitute written notice
20 to Respondent of the charges of unprofessional conduct made by the Board against him.
21 Respondent is entitled to a formal hearing to defend these charges within 60 days after the
22 issuance of this order pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1451(D).

1 3. The Board's Executive Director is instructed to refer this matter to the Office
2 of Administrative Hearings for scheduling of an administrative hearing to be commenced
3 within sixty days from the date of the issuance of this order, unless stipulated and agreed
4 otherwise by Respondent.

5
6 DATED AND EFFECTIVE this 6th day of April, 2017.

7
8 ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD

9 By Patricia E. McSorley
10 Patricia E. McSorley
11 Executive Director

12 EXECUTED COPY of the foregoing mailed
13 this 6th day of April, 2017 to:

14
15 Robert Wolkin
16 Wolkin Law Group
17 3301 E Camino Campestre
18 Tucson, AZ 85716-5829
19 Attorney for Respondent

20 ORIGINAL of the foregoing filed
21 this 6th day of April, 2017 with:

22 Arizona Medical Board
23 9545 E. Doubletree Ranch Road
24 Scottsdale, AZ 85258

25
26 Mary Barber
27 Board staff