

BEFORE THE  
NORTH CAROLINA MEDICAL BOARD

In re: )  
 )  
John Carl Pittman, MD ) CONSENT ORDER  
 )  
Respondent. )

This matter is before the North Carolina Medical Board ("Board") on information received relating to John Carl Pittman, MD ("Dr. Pittman"). Dr. Pittman admits and the Board finds and concludes that:

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Board is a body duly organized under the laws of North Carolina and is the proper party to bring this proceeding under the authority granted it in Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the North Carolina General Statutes and the rules and regulations promulgated thereto.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On November 29, 2002, the Board issued Dr. Pittman a license to practice medicine, license number 31614.
2. During the times relevant herein, Dr. Pittman practiced medicine in Raleigh, North Carolina.
3. Patient A is a 15 year old minor who presented to Dr. Pittman with multiple non-specific symptoms, including headache, dizziness, leg numbness, fatigue, and malaise.

4. On January 29, 2013, Dr. Pittman had his initial office visit with Patient A, who returned on January 31, 2013 for initial laboratory testing for diagnostic purposes.

5. The laboratory blood work from January 31, 2013 showed a low platelet count of 22,000 (normal 150,000 to 349,000). Dr. Pittman reports that he was not notified by his staff of this level and therefore failed to immediately address this dangerously low platelet count with Patient A or her family. On February 21, 2013, Carrie Yerkes, P.A., Dr. Pittman's physician assistant wrote, "new lab order for CBC to be drawn in next 1-2 days to recheck platelet levels as latest labs on 1/31/13 shows [sic] critically low levels at 22 per LapCorp [sic] and 27 per Solstas."

6. At this point, neither Dr. Pittman nor Ms. Yerkes has contacted the parents of Patient A.

7. Patient A underwent additional lab work on or around February 25, 2013. The results of that lab work revealed that Patient A's platelet levels dropped to 14,000.

8. On February 26, 2013, Dr. Pittman documented awareness of the critical lab values. Dr. Pittman did not contact Patient A's mother. Instead, Dr. Pittman requested that Ms. Yerkes contact Patient A's mother "to let her know about this lab and that the patient should be seen by her primary care physician to

investigate this finding, possibly referring to a hematologist for evaluation."

9. On this same day, February 26, 2013, Patient A's mother was made aware of the low platelet count by Ms. Yerkes. Patient A's mother, after discussing the matter with Ms. Yerkes and Patient A's primary care physician's triage nurse, decided to take Patient A to the emergency room. Patient A's mother reported that Patient A had been experiencing extreme dizziness and abdominal pain.

10. Patient A presented to the emergency room and was admitted to the hospital. At this point, Patient A's platelet levels had fallen to 11,000. Patient A was diagnosed with idiopathic thrombocytopenia purpura (ITP), a condition characterized by excessive bleeding and bruising brought about by a low platelet count. Dr. Pittman discontinued all therapies and supplements pending the stabilization of the platelet count. Patient A was monitored by a hematologist and her counts stabilized.

11. Dr. Pittman's delay in recognizing and addressing the low platelet count until several weeks after his initial blood test placed Patient A at a higher risk for potential catastrophic illness.

12. The standard of care in North Carolina for a physician when presented with a blood test that shows a dangerously low

platelet count is for the physician to immediately address that test result with the patient or, in the case of a minor, the patient's parent or guardian. Dr. Pittman failed to meet the standard of care in this regard.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Dr. Pittman's treatment of Patient A, as described herein, constitutes unprofessional conduct including, but not limited to, departure from or the failure to conform to the standards of acceptable and prevailing medical practice, irrespective of whether or not a patient is injured thereby, within the meaning of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-14(a)(6), which is grounds for the Board to annul, suspend, revoke, condition, or limit Dr. Pittman's medical license to practice medicine and surgery issued by the Board or to deny any application he might make in the future.

#### PROCEDURAL STIPULATIONS

1. Dr. Pittman acknowledges and agrees that the Board has jurisdiction over him and over the subject matter in this case.
2. Dr. Pittman knowingly waives his right to any hearing and to any judicial review or appeal of this case.
3. Dr. Pittman acknowledges that he has read and understands this Consent Order and enters into it voluntarily.
4. The Board has determined it to be in the public interest to resolve this matter as set forth below.

5. Dr. Pittman would like to resolve this matter without the need for more formal proceedings.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, with Dr. Pittman's consent, it is ORDERED that:

1. Dr. Pittman is hereby REPRIMANDED for the above-described conduct.

2. After ninety (90) days from the date of this Consent Order, Dr. Pittman shall only treat patients ages eighteen (18) years old and older. For purposes of this provision, Dr. Pittman may treat minors who have been judicially declared emancipated.

3. Dr. Pittman shall obey all laws. Likewise, Dr. Pittman shall obey all rules and regulations involving the practice of medicine.

4. Dr. Pittman shall meet with the Board or members of the Board for an investigative interview as such times as requested by the Board.

5. If Dr. Pittman fails to comply with any of the terms of this Consent Order, that failure shall constitute unprofessional conduct within the meaning of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-14(a)(6) and shall be grounds, after any required notice and hearing, for the Board to annul, revoke, suspend or limit his license or to deny

any application he might then have pending or might make in the future for a license.


6. This Consent Order shall take effect immediately upon its execution by both Dr. Pittman and the Board and it shall continue in effect until specifically ordered otherwise by the Board.

7. Dr. Pittman hereby waives any requirement under any law or rule that this Consent Order be served on him.

8. Upon execution by Dr. Pittman and the Board, this Consent shall become a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes and shall be subject to public inspection and dissemination pursuant to the provisions thereof. Additionally, it will be reported to persons, entities, agencies and clearinghouses as required and permitted by law.

By Order of the North Carolina Medical Board this the  
20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2015,

NORTH CAROLINA MEDICAL BOARD

By:   
Pascal O. Udekwu, MD  
President

Consented to, this the 20<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2015.

John Carl Pittman  
John Carl Pittman, MD

State of North Carolina

County of Wake

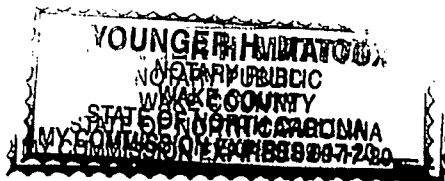
I, Y. H. Mattox, a Notary Public for the above named County and State, do hereby certify that John Carl Pittman, MD personally appear before me this day and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing instrument.

Witness my hand and official seal

This, the 20<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2015.

Y. H. Mattox  
Notary Public

(SEAL)



My Commission expires: 9.17.20