

# LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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In The Matter Of  
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RUSSELL M. COCO, M.D.  
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CONSENT  
ORDER  
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From February 1982 to May 1983, Russell M. Coco, M.D. (Dr. Coco), a Baton Rouge physician, was the subject of an investigation by the Diversion Investigative Unit—Narcotics Section (DIU), Criminal Investigation Bureau, Louisiana State Police. In the course of the investigation, a confidential informant and four DIU agents posing as patients under fictitious names visited Dr. Coco's office on 11 occasions for the purpose of determining whether the physician was issuing prescriptions for controlled substances without legitimate medical justification.

According to the investigative report, the agents gave Dr. Coco various illegitimate, nonmedical reasons for desiring prescriptions for controlled substances. With no or at best minimal physical examinations, the agents reported, the physician issued a total of 29 prescriptions during the period of their investigation. The confidential informant was given a prescription for 90 Deprol (benactyzine hydrochloride/meprobamate) tablets. Three of the agents were consistently given separate prescriptions for 30 Tranxene (clorazepate dipotassium) 7.5 mg. capsules and 30 Miltown 600 (meprobamate) 600 mg. tablets. A third received two prescriptions for 30 Miltown 600 tablets. The fourth agent was given prescriptions by Dr. Coco for 30 Mellaril (thioridazine) 25 mg. tablets and 30 Tepanil Ten-Tab (diethylpropion hydrochloride) 75 mg. tablets.

Upon review of the circumstances surrounding the issuance of such prescriptions and the evidence developed during the DIU investigation, the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners (Board) concluded that

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such evidence was sufficient to constitute probable cause to institute formal administrative proceedings charging Dr. Coco with "[p]rescribing . . . habit-forming or other legally controlled substances in other than a legal or legitimate manner," in violation of the Louisiana Medical Practice Act, R.S. 37:1285(6). The Board determined, however, that in lieu of formal proceedings, it would accept the physician's execution of a Consent Order pursuant to which he would agree to surrender his state license and Federal registration to prescribe controlled substances, and so advised Dr. Coco.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Coco has advised the Board of his acceptance of such a disposition of this matter.<sup>2</sup>

Recognizing his right to notice of the charges specified against him, to have such charges adjudicated pursuant to R.S. 49:955-58, to be represented therein by legal counsel of his choice, and to a final decision rendered upon written findings of fact and conclusions of law, Dr. Coco nonetheless hereby waives his right to notice and formal adjudication of charges and, pursuant to R.S. 49:955D, acknowledges, accepts and consents to entry of the following order.

Accordingly, in consideration of the foregoing, and pursuant to the authority vested in the Board by R.S. 37:1285 and 49:955D,

**IT IS ORDERED** that, until and unless this Order is modified or rescinded by written Order of the Board, Russell, M. Coco, M.D. shall not prescribe, dispense or administer Controlled Substances, as defined, enumerated or included in 21 C.F.R. §§ 1308.11-.15 and LSA-R.S. 40:964, and any substance which may hereafter be included in any controlled substance schedule by amendment or revision of the cited regulations or statute. Consistent with this Order, the Secretary of the Board is hereby authorized and directed to cause the issuing authorities to cancel and revoke Dr. Coco's state license and Federal registration relative to the prescription, dispensation or administration of controlled substances.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that any violation of the terms, conditions and restrictions set forth hereinabove shall be deemed just cause for the suspension or revocation of the medical licensure of Russell M. Coco, M.D. or for such other disciplinary action as the Board deems appropriate,

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<sup>1</sup>Letter, J.M. Lyons, M.D. Sec.-Treas., La. St. Bd. Med. Exam. to R.M. Coco, M.D. (July 27, 1983).

<sup>2</sup>Letter, R.M. Coco, M.D. to La. St. Bd. Med. Exam. (Aug. 1, 1983).

as if such violation were enumerated among the causes provided in R.S. 37:1285

New Orleans, Louisiana, this 24 day of August, 1983.

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF  
MEDICAL EXAMINERS

By: Charles B. Odom, M.D.  
CHARLES B. ODOM, M.D.  
President

I HEREBY acknowledge, approve, accept and consent to entry of the above and foregoing Consent Order and the terms, conditions and restrictions set forth therein, this 19th day of August, 1983.

Russell M. Coco, M.D.  
RUSSELL M. COCO, M.D.

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CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

Mrs. Delmar Rorison, Executive Assistant  
Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners

Date \_\_\_\_\_