

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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	X	
	:	No. 2016 – I – 585
IN THE MATTER OF	:	
	:	
<b>Sreelatha Pulakhandam, M.D.</b>	:	
(Certificate No. 201314),	:	<b>CONSENT</b>
	:	<b>ORDER</b>
<i>Respondent</i>	:	_____
	:	
	:	
	X	

The above-entitled proceeding was docketed for investigation by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners (the "Board") following the receipt information which indicated that Sreelatha Pulakhandam, M.D. ("Dr. Pulakhandam"), who is, and was at all times material to the facts and matters alleged herein, a physician duly licensed by the Board to practice medicine in the state of Louisiana pursuant to the Louisiana Medical Practice Act, La. Rev. Stat. §§37:1261 *et seq.*, as evidenced by Certificate No. 201314, may have been directing clinic staff to fill out pre-signed prescriptions, including prescriptions for drugs containing buprenorphine, a Schedule III controlled substance, and to complete medical records on her patients while she was out of the country. Additionally, Dr. Pulakhandam may have falsified medical records to indicate that she examined patients on dates when she was out of the country.

As evidenced by her subscription hereto, Dr. Pulakhandam acknowledges that the foregoing information could provide the Investigating Officer for the Board with probable cause to pursue formal administrative proceedings against her for violation of the Louisiana Medical Practice Act, La. Rev. Stat. §§37:1285A(6), (13), (18), (30), and the Board Rules,<sup>1</sup> constituting

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to La. R.S. §37:1285(A), the Board may suspend, revoke, or impose probation or other restrictions on the license of an individual licensed to practice medicine in the State of Louisiana as a result of: "(6) [p]rescribing, dispensing, or administering legally controlled substances or any dependency-induced medication without legitimate medical justification therefore or in other than a legal or legitimate manner;" "(13) [u]nprofessional conduct, including but not limited to . . . intentionally falsifying or fraudulently altering records, or failing to create or maintain medical records . . . [and] enabling the unauthorized practice of medicine;" "(18) [k]nowingly performing any act which, in any way, assists an unlicensed person to practice medicine;" and "(30) [v]iolation of any rules and regulations of the board. . . ." Pursuant to the Board Rules, physicians may not "falsely create or alter a medical record or destroy a medical record except as authorized by law." La. Admin Code 46:XLV.7603(A)(10). " Pursuant to the Board Rules, physicians may not "enter into any arrangement, as medical director or otherwise, that allows or condones an unlicensed individual to engage in the practice of medicine, as defined by R.S. 37:1261(1), in the absence of the

sufficient cause for the revocation, suspension or such other action against her license to practice medicine in the state of Louisiana as the Board may determine appropriate.

Recognizing her right to written notification of any charges that may be asserted against her as a result of this investigation, as well as the right to administrative adjudication of such charges, at which time she would be entitled to be represented by legal counsel, to call witnesses and to present evidence on her own behalf in defense or in mitigation of the charges made, and to a decision thereon by the Board based upon written findings of fact and conclusions of law, pursuant to La. Rev. Stat. §§49:955-965, Dr. Pulakhandam, nonetheless, hereby waives her right to formal adjudication and, pursuant to La. Rev. Stat. §49:955(D), consents to entry of the Order set forth hereinafter. Dr. Pulakhandam also acknowledges that she hereby waives any right to which she may be entitled pursuant to the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act, La. Rev. Stat. §49:951, *et seq.*, or to which she otherwise may be afforded by any law to contest her agreement to or the force and effect of the Board's investigation or this document in any court or other forum. By her subscription hereto, Dr. Pulakhandam also hereby authorizes the I/O designated by the Board with respect hereto, to present this Consent Order to the Board for its consideration and to fully disclose to and discuss with the Board the nature and results of the investigation, and she waives any objection to such disclosures under La. Rev. Stat. §49:960. Dr. Pulakhandam expressly acknowledges that the disclosure of such information to the Board by the I/O shall be without prejudice to the I/O's authority to proceed with the filing and adjudication of an Administrative Complaint against her or to the Board's capacity to adjudicate such Complaint, should the Board decline to approve this Consent Order.

**IT IS ORDERED** that the license of Sreelatha Pulakhandam, M.D. to practice medicine in the state of Louisiana, as evidenced by Certificate No. 201314, is hereby placed on **PROBATION** for One (1) year; *provided, however*, that such licensure and Dr. Pulakhandam continuing exercise of rights and privileges granted thereby, shall be conditioned upon and subject to her acceptance of and strict compliance with the following terms, conditions and restrictions:

(1) **Practice Monitoring and Quarterly Reports.** Within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this Order, Dr. Pulakhandam shall enter into an agreement with a Board-approved practice monitor to monitor and review Dr. Pulakhandam's medical practice during the probationary period. The practice monitor shall review no less than ten (10) records a quarter. The practice monitoring shall provide quarterly reports to the Board that will include an opinion as to whether Dr. Pulakhandam is practicing and documenting her patient's evaluation and treatment in accordance with the prevailing standards of a medical practice. Dr. Pulakhandam shall bear all costs associated with the practice monitor program.

(2) **Course on Professionalism and Medical Ethics.** Within one (1) year of the effective date of this Order, Dr. Pulakhandam shall attend and successfully complete a course (or courses) on professionalism and medical ethics. The course shall be approved in advance by the Board. On or before the expiration of one (1) year from the effective date of this Order Dr. Pulakhandam shall cause to be submitted to the Board written certification of satisfaction of the requirements of this provision.

(3) **Course on Proper Prescribing.** Within one (1) year of the effective date of this Order, Dr. Pulakhandam shall attend and successfully complete a course (or courses) on the proper prescribing of controlled substances. The course shall be approved in advance by the Board. On or before the expiration of one (1) year from the effective date of this Order Dr. Pulakhandam shall cause to be submitted to the Board written certification of satisfaction of the requirements of this provision.

(4) **Continuing Medical Education.** Dr. Pulakhandam shall obtain not less than fifty (50) credit hours per year during her probationary term through attendance at and participation in continuing medical education programs ("CME") accredited by the American College of Physicians, the American Medical Association, or such other national accrediting association or organization as the Board may approve in writing. On or before the anniversary of the effective date of this Order, Dr. Pulakhandam shall cause to be submitted to the Board written certification of the CME programs and credits completed by her during the preceding twelve (12) months.

(5) **Absence from State/Practice/Effect on Probation.** Should Dr. Pulakhandam at any time during the period of probation ordered herein be absent from the state of Louisiana, relocate to and/or take up residency in another state or country or discontinue practicing medicine for a period of thirty (30) days or more, or should she fail to renew her license to practice medicine in this state, she shall advise the Board in writing. In such instance, the probationary period ordered herein and all terms, conditions and restrictions thereof shall be deemed interrupted and extended and shall not commence to run until Dr. Pulakhandam notifies the Board in writing that she has returned to, relocated or taken up residency in, resumed the practice medicine in this state, or renewed her Louisiana medical license. In such instance, Dr. Pulakhandam shall not receive credit toward completion of the probationary period for the time during which she was absent from the State of Louisiana or while she was not engaged or licensed to practice medical psychology in this state.

(6) **Certification of Compliance with Probationary Terms.** At least sixty (60) days prior to the conclusion of the probationary term imposed herein, Dr. Pulakhandam shall provide the Board with an affidavit certifying that he has complied with each of the terms of probation imposed by this Order. The probationary period and all of its terms and conditions shall be, and shall be

deemed to be, extended and continued in full force and effect pending Dr. Pulakhandam compliance with the requirements of this provision.

(7) **Cooperation with Board's Probation and Compliance Officer.** Dr. Pulakhandam shall immediately notify the Board's Probation and Compliance Officer of any change in her current home and professional addresses and telephone numbers and she shall direct all matters required pursuant to this Consent Order to the attention of the Probation and Compliance Officer, with whom she shall cooperate on all matters and inquiries pertaining to her compliance with the terms, conditions and restrictions of this Order.

(8) **Probation Monitoring Fee.** For each year of the probationary term Dr. Pulakhandam shall pay the Board a probation monitoring fee of Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars. Payment of the initial fee shall be due not later than sixty (60) days from the effective date of this Order. All subsequent annual payments shall be due on or before the anniversary date of the initial fee payment.

(9) **Payment of Fine.** Within one (1) year of the effective date of this Order, Dr. Pulakhandam shall pay to the Board a fine in the amount of Five Thousand and no/100 (\$5,000.00) Dollars.

(10) **Effective Date.** This Consent Order shall be effective the date it is approved and accepted by the Board as shown by the signature of its representative below.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that any violation or failure of strict compliance with any of the terms, conditions or restrictions set forth by this Order by Dr. Pulakhandam shall be deemed adequate and sufficient cause, upon proof of such violation or failure, for such other action against Dr. Pulakhandam's license to practice medicine in the state of Louisiana as the Board may deem appropriate, as if such violations were enumerated among the causes provided in La. Rev. Stat. §37:1285(A).

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that this Order shall be, and shall be deemed to be, a public record.

Signed at New Orleans, Louisiana, and effective on this 16<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2017.

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD  
OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

By:



Christy L. Valentine, M.D.  
*President*

*Acknowledgment and Consent on the following page*

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT  
AND CONSENT**

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
PARISH OF St. Tammany

I, **SREELATHA PULAKHANDAM, M.D.**, hereby acknowledge, approve, accept and consent to entry of the above and foregoing Order, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2017.

*Sreelatha Pulakhandam*  
**SREELATHA PULAKHANDAM, M.D.**

WITNESSES:

*Nicole Smith*  
Signature

Nicole Smith  
Typed Name

360 Emerald Forest Blvd Ste D  
Address

Covington, LA 70433  
City/State/Zip Code

*Jacques Dutel*  
Signature

Jacques Dutel  
Typed Name

360 Emerald Forest Blvd Ste D  
Address

Covington, LA 70433  
City/State/Zip Code

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 20<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2017  
in the presence of the two stated witnesses.

*Angela J. Barron*  
Notary Public (Signature)

Angela J. Barron 134335  
Printed Name & Notary or Bar Number

