

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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In The Matter Of
FRANCIS X. CLINE, JR. M.D.
(Certificate No. 006581),

Respondent.
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No. 95-I-074

CONSENT ORDER

An investigation conducted by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners (the "Board") has indicated that Francis X. Cline, Jr., M.D., a Monroe, Louisiana, orthopedic surgeon,¹ suffers from and has recently received treatment for alcoholism, recently in relapse. The physician's alcohol dependency was initially identified in 1988 by the Impaired Physician's Committee of the Glenwood Regional Medical Center ("GRMC") and the Ouachita Parish Physicians' Health Committee (the "Ouachita PHC") based on the observations and expressed concerns of patients and staff of GRMC. At the instance of the Ouachita PHC, Dr. Cline then signed a two-year treatment contract providing for his regular attendance at Caduceus Club and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and his maintenance of abstinence from the use of alcohol. Prior to the conclusion of such contract, however, Dr. Cline had resumed consumption of alcohol, use which progressively escalated in frequency and volume to as much as half of a fifth of whiskey each evening. In early December 1995, accordingly, the physician was again confronted by the Ouachita PHC which recommended that he undergo a one-week assessment at the Palmetto Addiction Recovery Center ("PARC"), Rayville, Louisiana, where he was found to have a "significant alcohol dependency problem."²

In conjunction with his assessment, Dr. Cline was admitted to PARC for six weeks of inpatient/residential treatment, and was discharged with a diagnosis of "alcohol dependency, in relapse" to four additional weeks of intensive outpatient therapy. Upon discharge, the physician signed an ongoing after-care monitoring contract with the Ouachita PHC for a period of five years. His treating physician at PARC advises that Dr. Cline made good progress in treatment, that he is now in recovery and that there are no clinical reasons contraindicating his practice of medicine.

As evidenced by his subscription hereto, Dr. Cline acknowledges the substantial accuracy of the foregoing information and that such information could provide the Investigating Officer and the Board with probable cause to charge the physician with "[h]abitual or recurring abuse of drugs, including alcohol..." and potentially, "[i]nability to practice medicine...with reasonable skill and safety to patients because of...excessive use of abuse of drugs, including alcohol," La. Rev. Stat. § 37:1285(A)(5), (25), providing sufficient legal cause for the suspension or revocation of the physician's license to practice medicine in the

¹Dr. Cline, currently 69-years-of age, is a 1951 graduate of the Louisiana State University School of Medicine who, following an internship at Touro Infirmary, New Orleans in 1951-52, an a one-year residency in general practice at EA Conway Hospital, Monroe, completed a three-year residency in orthopedic surgery at Confederate Memorial Hospital in Shreveport, Louisiana, from 1957 to 1960.

²Letter, D. W. Cook, M.D., Dir., Palmetto Addiction Recovery Center, to La. State Bd. Med. Exam. (Dec. 11, 1996).

state of Louisiana. Recognizing his right to administrative adjudication of such charges pursuant to La. Rev. Stat. §§ 49:955-958, and to a final decision rendered upon written findings of fact and conclusions of law, Dr. Cline nonetheless hereby waives his right to formal adjudication and, pursuant to La. Rev. Stat. § 49:955(D), consents to entry of the Order set forth hereinafter.

This matter is now before the Board on the recommendation of the Investigating Officer and the Physicians Health Committee of the Board that Dr. Cline's license to practice medicine in Louisiana be reinstated on probation, subject to specified appropriate terms, conditions and restrictions. Based on such recommendation, and upon its review of the available information respecting the physician's recent treatment, the Board is persuaded that the condition from which Dr. Cline suffers is and has been susceptible to effective medical treatment, resulting in the maintenance or restoration of the physician's capacity to engage in the practice of medicine with reasonable skill and safety to patients, provided that Dr. Cline strictly observes and complies with appropriate restrictions on and conditions to maintenance of his medical licensure.

Accordingly, in consideration of the foregoing, and pursuant to the authority vested in the Board by La. Rev. Stat. § 37:1285 and La. Rev. Stat. § 49:955(D);

IT IS ORDERED that the license of Francis X. Cline, Jr., M.D., to engage in the practice of medicine in the state of Louisiana, as evidenced by certificate no. 006581, be, and the same is hereby, effective as of the date hereof, **PLACED ON PROBATION**, for a period of five (5) years from the date hereof; *provided, however*, that Dr. Cline's continuing exercise of rights and privileges thereunder shall be conditioned upon his acceptance of and strict compliance with the following probationary terms, conditions and restrictions:

(a) Continuing Aftercare; Reports to Board. Dr. Cline shall continue in, abide by and comply in all respects with the outpatient treatment program prescribed or recommended by his treating physicians at the Palmetto Addiction Recovery Center to the extent that they continue to follow him. Dr. Cline shall authorize and cause such physicians to submit to the Board, not less frequently than quarterly throughout the probationary period, written reports on Dr. Cline's then-current treatment diagnosis, course of treatment, prognosis, his maintenance of abstinence from alcohol and mood-altering chemicals, his fitness and ability to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety to patients, and his compliance with the terms, conditions and restrictions of the PHP Contract and of this Order.

(b) Participation in Physicians Health Program. Dr. Cline shall continue in, abide by and comply in all respects with the terms, conditions and provisions of his Substance Abuse Treatment Contract with the Physicians' Health Program of the Louisiana State Medical Society (the "PHP Contract"). Within five days of the date hereof, Dr. Cline shall deliver a copy of such contract to the Board. Dr. Cline shall authorize and cause his treating and monitoring physicians, as designated in the PHP Contract, to submit to the Board, not less frequently than quarterly throughout the probationary period, written reports on Dr. Cline's compliance with the terms, conditions and restrictions of the PHP Contract and of this Order.

(c) Maintenance of Complete Abstinence. Dr. Cline shall, for the duration of his life, maintain complete and total abstinence from the use of alcohol and any mood-altering substance except as may be prescribed by a treating physician other than himself for a *bona fide* medical condition.

(d) Continuing Medical Education. Dr. Cline shall obtain not less than 50 credit hours per year for each of the five years during the term of probationary licensure through attendance at and participation in continuing medical education programs (CME) accredited by and qualifying for the Physician's Recognition Award of the American Medical Association, and he shall obtain such

award within three years from the date hereof. On or before October 1 of each year during the term of probation ordered hereby, Dr. Cline shall cause to be submitted to the Board written certification of the CME programs and credits completed by him during the preceding 12 months.


(e) **Personal Appearances Before Impaired Physicians Committee.** Dr. Cline shall personally appear before the Physicians Health Committee of the Board, or its designee, at its meeting next preceding the expiration of the probationary term ordered hereunder.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that any violation of or failure of strict compliance with any of the conditions or restrictions set forth by this Order by Dr. Cline shall be deemed adequate and sufficient cause, upon proof of such violation or failure, for the final revocation and cancellation of Dr. Cline's license to practice medicine in the state of Louisiana.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Order is and shall be deemed to be and treated as a public record in all respects.

New Orleans, Louisiana, this ~~23rd~~ ^{May} day of ~~April~~, 1996.

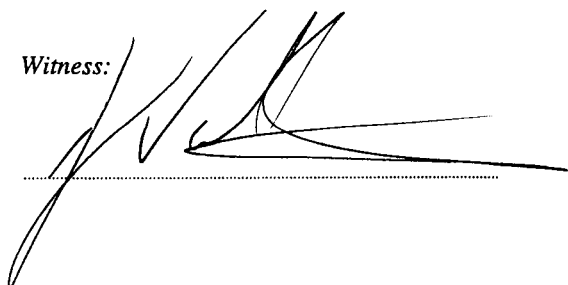
LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF
MEDICAL EXAMINERS

By: 
F. P. BORDELON, JR., M.D.
President

ACKNOWLEDGMENT
AND CONSENT

I, FRANCIS X. CLINE, JR., M.D., hereby acknowledge, approve, accept and consent to entry of the above and foregoing Order, this 9 day of April, 1996.

Witness:




FRANCIS X. CLINE, JR., M.D.

MAY
~~April~~ 1996