

1 **BEFORE THE ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD**

2 In the Matter of

3 **CLIFFORD T. BAKER, M.D.**

4 Holder of License No. 42990
5 For the Practice of Allopathic Medicine
6 In the State of Arizona.

Case No. MD-24-0035A

**ORDER FOR LETTER OF
REPRIMAND; AND CONSENT TO THE
SAME**

7 Clifford T. Baker, M.D. ("Respondent") elects to permanently waive any right to a
8 hearing and appeal with respect to this Order for a Letter of Reprimand; admits the
9 jurisdiction of the Arizona Medical Board ("Board"); and consents to the entry of this Order
10 by the Board.

11 **FINDINGS OF FACT**

12 1. The Board is the duly constituted authority for the regulation and control of
13 the practice of allopathic medicine in the State of Arizona.

14 2. Respondent is the holder of license number 42990 for the practice of
15 allopathic medicine in the State of Arizona.

16 3. The Board initiated case number MD-24-0035A after receiving notification of
17 a malpractice settlement regarding Respondent's care and treatment of a 79 year-old
18 female patient ("BA") alleging improper performance of a lumbar epidural transforaminal
19 steroid injection ("LESI") at L1-S1 resulting in paraplegia.

20 4. BA had a medical history of lumbar radiculopathy, lumbar spondylosis,
21 sacroiliac joint disease, and greater trochanteric bursitis. BA had been on long-term opioid
22 management with some pain relief and improved function. BA was previously treated by
23 Respondent at a Spinal Clinic for back and hip pain for over five years. BA had undergone
24 multiple treatments including bilateral medial branch nerve blocks, right lumbar
25 radiofrequency ablation ("RFA"), bilateral L4-5 transforaminal epidural steroid injection

1 ("TESI"), bilateral L5-S1 TESI, spinal cord stimulator, right hip injection, knee injection, and
2 bilateral facet joint injection.

3 5. On July 6, 2021, BA was evaluated by a Nurse Practitioner at the Spinal
4 Clinic for lower thoracic and upper lumbar pain with radiation to the sides, hips, and upper
5 buttocks. An epidural steroid injection was ordered.

6 6. On July 8, 2021, BA presented to Spinal Clinic for the lumbar epidural steroid
7 injection under fluoroscopy performed by Respondent. BA elected to have monitored
8 anesthesia for the procedure due to her anxiety. A right L1 transforaminal epidural was
9 completed using both AP and oblique fluoroscopy. Isovue 200 contrast was injected.
10 Subsequently 5ml from a mixture of 20mg dexamethasone, 4ml of 1% lidocaine
11 preservative free, and 4 ml of normal saline preservative free was injected. Next, the left
12 S1 transforaminal epidural injection was completed with 5ml of the mixture injected.

13 7. Post-operatively, BA developed symptoms consistent with a spinal block,
14 with a motor block and hypoesthesia from the dermatome L1 and below. EMS was called
15 for transport to the Hospital. On presentation to the emergency room, BA's bilateral lower
16 extremities were "extremely flaccid" and sensory findings were absent from the navel
17 down. A neurosurgical evaluation concluded the cause was most likely cord infarct or
18 direct puncture trauma to the cord. BA declined surgical intervention because of the
19 possibility surgery would not restore function with a risk of worsening the situation.

20 8. On August 10, 2021, BA was evaluated at the Spinal Clinic via telehealth by
21 a Nurse Practitioner for a Percocet refill. BA reported no pain in her low back or lower
22 limbs but had pain in the upper back, shoulders, and arms. BA reported having to utilize a
23 wheelchair for mobility and straight catheterizing to urinate. This was the last visit with the
24 Spinal Clinic.

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1 9. The standard of care requires a physician to properly perform a lumbar
2 epidural transforaminal steroid injection Respondent deviated from this standard of care by
3 failing to properly perform a lumbar epidural transforaminal steroid injection.

4 10. Actual patient harm was identified in that the patient suffered a complete
5 spinal cord injury resulting in paraplegia from the T10 level and below.

6 **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

7 a. The Board possesses jurisdiction over the subject matter hereof and over
8 Respondent.

9 b. The conduct and circumstances described above constitute unprofessional
10 conduct pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1401(27)(e) ("Failing or refusing to maintain adequate
11 records on a patient.").

12 c. The conduct and circumstances described above constitute unprofessional
13 conduct pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1401(27)(r) ("Committing any conduct or practice that is or
14 might be harmful or dangerous to the health of the patient or the public.").

15 d. c. The conduct and circumstances described above constitute
16 unprofessional conduct pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1401(27)(jj) ("Exhibiting a lack of or
17 inappropriate direction, collaboration or direct supervision of a medical assistant or a
18 licensed, certified or registered health care provider employed by, supervised by or
19 assigned to the physician.").

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1 **ORDER**

2 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

3 1. Respondent is issued a Letter of Reprimand.

4 DATED AND EFFECTIVE this 2nd day of April, 2025.

5 ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD

6 *Patricia E. McSorley*

7 By _____
8 Patricia E. McSorley
9 Executive Director

10 **CONSENT TO ENTRY OF ORDER**

11 1. Respondent has read and understands this Consent Agreement and the
12 stipulated Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order ("Order"). Respondent
13 acknowledges he has the right to consult with legal counsel regarding this matter.

14 2. Respondent acknowledges and agrees that this Order is entered into freely
15 and voluntarily and that no promise was made or coercion used to induce such entry.

16 3. By consenting to this Order, Respondent voluntarily relinquishes any rights to
17 a hearing or judicial review in state or federal court on the matters alleged, or to challenge
18 this Order in its entirety as issued by the Board, and waives any other cause of action
19 related thereto or arising from said Order.

20 4. The Order is not effective until approved by the Board and signed by its
21 Executive Director.

22 5. All admissions made by Respondent in this Order are solely for final
23 disposition of this matter and any subsequent related administrative proceedings or civil
24 litigation involving the Board and Respondent. Therefore, said admissions by Respondent
25 are not intended or made for any other use, such as in the context of another state or

1 federal government regulatory agency proceeding, civil or criminal court proceeding, in the
2 State of Arizona or any other state or federal court.


3 6. Notwithstanding any language in this Order, this Order does not preclude in
4 any way any other State agency or officer or political subdivision of this state from
5 instituting proceedings, investigating claims, or taking legal action as may be appropriate
6 now or in the future relating to this matter or other matters concerning Respondent,
7 including but not limited to, violations of Arizona's Consumer Fraud Act. Respondent
8 acknowledges that, other than with respect to the Board, this Order makes no
9 representations, implied or otherwise, about the views or intended actions of any other
10 state agency or officer or political subdivisions of the State relating to this matter or other
11 matters concerning Respondent

12 7. Upon signing this agreement, and returning this document (or a copy thereof)
13 to the Board's Executive Director, Respondent may not revoke the consent to the entry of
14 the Order. Respondent may not make any modifications to the document. Any
15 modifications to this original document are ineffective and void unless mutually approved
16 by the parties.

17 8. This Order is a public record that will be publicly disseminated as a formal
18 disciplinary action of the Board and will be reported to the National Practitioner's Data
19 Bank and on the Board's web site as a disciplinary action.

20 9. If the Board does not adopt this Order, Respondent will not assert as a
21 defense that the Board's consideration of the Order constitutes bias, prejudice,
22 prejudgment or other similar defense.

23 10. ***Respondent has read and understands the terms of this agreement.***

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CLIFFORD T. BAKER, M.D.

DATED: _____

3/7/2025

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EXECUTED COPY of the foregoing mailed
this 2nd day of April, 2025 to:

Fredrick M. Cummings, Esq.
Gust Rosenfield, PLC
One East Washington Street, Suite 1600
Phoenix, Arizona 85004
Attorney for Respondent

ORIGINAL of the foregoing filed
this 2nd day of April, 2025 with:

Arizona Medical Board
1740 West Adams, Suite 4000
Phoenix, Arizona 85007



Board staff