



**CHRIS HATLESTAD, MD, PC**  
**FAMILY MEDICINE**  
**INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE**

November 10, 2016

Shirin Sukumar, MD. Board Chairman  
Kathleen Haley, Executive Director  
Eric Brown, Investigator  
Oregon Medical Board  
1500 SW First Avenue, Suite 620  
Portland, OR 97201

RE: OMB Inquiry #15-0260

Dr. Sukumar, Ms. Haley and Mr. Brown:

It is with extreme reluctance that I write to voluntarily suspend my medical license in the state of Oregon effective 11/15/16. I am doing this under duress by the OMB and under advisement of counsel as it seems that I have little recourse for other options and the OMB is unwilling to negotiate any other solution to this inquiry. I understand that I will be granted an administrative license through the end of 2016 calendar year to effectively close out my practice. During that time I will be available to patients and other providers by phone and email to provide patient records and facilitate transfer of care. Almost all of these records are now available in electronic format and will be transferred as such.

I am not admitting to any wrong doing with this action. In fact, it is an extreme response to minor complaints made by another physician and a biased investigation by OMB and CPEP that shows no evidence of patient harm or patient complaint.

The OMB Complaint of 4/20/16 uses exaggerated and inflammatory language of “unprofessional or dishonorable conduct” and “gross or repeated negligence” to describe fallacious accusations of doing laboratory testing and commonly accepted medical treatments. Clinical justification for the testing and treatments was documented in the patient records and in literature provided both by myself and another licensed physician in Oregon. But, this information was treated without any apparent weight credibility. The reality is that this care is on the edge of what is considered ‘standard of care’ by conventional medicine. However, this ‘standard’, while a benchmark, is considered to be average care by many leaders in health care. In addition, these are practices that are well within standard practice by many physicians and naturopathic physicians across the US as well as the developed world and taught in national conferences that are sanctioned by the AMA.

It then seemed that, because the OMB could not admit that it had over-reacted and step back, it mandated a competency evaluation, only to be done by CPEP. This evaluation was both unreasonably expensive and extensive, placing a significant time and financial burden on me and my practice. Their final report came 2 months after the evaluation and nearly 18 months after the initial complaint. I do not believe the conclusions of CPEP are an accurate reflection of the interviews nor a valid assessment of my practice or knowledge base. The interviews were stressed and time limited, crowded with a lot of information in a number of areas. If I left out information, it was apparently interpreted as a knowledge deficit. For example, I did not specify an immunization schedule for a well 67yo female. What I did say



**CHRIS HATLESTAD, MD, PC**  
**FAMILY MEDICINE**  
**INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE**

is that I do not do immunizations in my office but refer them to the county health department and immunization clinic. For a hypothetical patient with acute back pain, I included narcotic analgesics as a potential therapy along with a number of other modalities or interventions but did not state that this should be a first line treatment. They indicated that my discussion of causative factors for autoimmune thyroiditis was 'incorrect'. However, the explanations I offered are well supported in the literature and they offered no alternative explanations. I could continue with all of the other similar discrepancies but they go beyond the scope of this letter and likely beyond your scope of interest or attention. In addition, my voice or that of my patients seem to have no weight or credibility against this group of physicians that only work within their boundaries of convention.

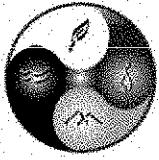
I believe that the criticisms CPEP raised were ones that any reasonable physician would have had difficulty giving complete information in that situation or in the time allowed. In fact, CPEP themselves state that 80% of the physicians evaluated in their program are found to have some measure of deficiency. Does this speak to the deficiencies of physicians in active practice or unreasonable expectations or conclusions of the organization?

Again, the distillation of concerns raised by CPEP against me are issues that push the limits of what are considered "standard of care". They were issues that I do not deal with in my current patient population, were mis-representations of what I actually said or were issues that, if needed during patient interactions, answers could be easily found in standard resources available to most anyone. However, in no way do their individual concerns, nor even the sum of them, seem to justify a recommendation for 100% supervision or the suspension of a medical license.

In no way do I believe that I have all the answers to my patient's issues or even answers superior to other physicians. Could I do better as a physician in all areas? Who among of us could not? However, what I do have is the willingness to step outside of convention to find answers to their difficult issues; to go beyond what other physicians tried. What I have done is spend the greater part of my practice life seeking out new answers to their difficult issues; trying to become better and fill the gaps in their care. What I do have is the vision to see past the science and statistic to find the individual. That is why patients come to see me; because conventional medicine failed to acknowledge their issues as legitimate, refused to look for alternate explanations or lacked the initiative and courage to find treatment options that they could either tolerate or benefit from.

All progress occurs with pushing the boundaries of convention. No one will find answers if they do not look beyond what has already been done. For this, I am guilty — but not remorseful. I have looked beyond 'standard of care' for options that I fully educated patients about and have developed a large measure of confidence in. These are options practiced by many other physicians in Oregon, across the US and in other countries as well. I have been proud to provide that service safely as a physician for years, filling a niche that is needed and sought after. I have been privileged to make compassionate and thoughtful connections to my patients with education, empowerment and humanism at the core.

After discussion with many physicians over the past 6 years, I am certain that the OMB has failed in its stated mission "to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of Oregon citizens by regulating the practice of medicine in a manner that promotes access to quality care." I have discovered that this is a dysfunction also found in the Medical Boards of several other states. You clearly have not improved access to quality health care beyond your limited viewpoint. You have used draconian methods akin to the Spanish Inquisition to punish, intimidate and threaten myself and other physicians who practice



**CHRIS HATLESTAD, MD, PC**  
**FAMILY MEDICINE**  
**INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE**

alternative and integrative medicine, contrary to the legislative allowance of ORS 677.190. You treat physicians of inquiry as guilty with a jaundiced view of any information to the contrary. You have perpetuated an atmosphere of fear and betrayal among physicians rather than promoting collegial teamwork; working to find answers to complex problems for patients in a broken medical system. You have ignored a whole culture of parallel health care practiced by licensed practitioners in this state and across the country that has been well established for nearly 100 years under the guise of, “we don’t regulate them”. You have removed any semblance of due process and legal rights normally accorded to people in the US when there is controversy or wrong-doing. You hide behind unbounded legislative power and impotent offers of hearings in front of a closed legal system within the OMB; a process financially impossible for most physicians and poor record of findings in favor of plaintiff.

In the end, perhaps I should thank you for pushing me out of a stressful and dysfunctional system and waking me from my naiveté to your reality. Regardless, I will survive and thrive; confident that my honor is intact and confident to be moving on to a higher purpose. But, I do not thank you for the stress and harm that you have invoked on my patients. I do not thank you for the financial harm nor the significant emotional injury and stress you have caused me and my family over the past 6 years for very poor reason or evidence. I do not thank you for stripping me of a naïve belief that we are all working in a collegial effort for the greater benefit of our patients. You don’t have my back, you stabbed me in the back.

Sincerely,

Chris Hatlestad, MD

Cc. Tara Costanza & Thomas McDermott

Hon. Kate Brown, Governor

Ron Wyden, Senator

Jeff Merkley, Senator

Earl Blumenauer, Representative