**MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF MEDICINE TAKES DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

WAKEFIELD: At its meeting on December 2, 2021, the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine took disciplinary action against the medical licenses of Debra M. Little, M.D., George Hayao, M.D., Geraldine Somers, M.D., and Ira Helfand, M.D.

In a Final Decision & Order, the Board reprimanded Dr. George Hayao after it adopted the parties’ stipulation that Dr. Hayao engaged in conduct that places into question his competence to practice medicine when he prescribed pain medications for two patients without conducting any physician examinations, without communicating with their other providers, and without maintaining medical records for them. In the stipulation, Dr. Hayao also admitted that he did not meet the standard of care in his treatment of another patient by prescribing inappropriate amounts of oxycodone. Dr. Hayao was additionally required to complete continuing professional development credits focused on opioid prescribing and record-keeping within sixty days. Dr. Hayao was first licensed to practice medicine in the Commonwealth on April 19, 1989. He currently practices medicine as a hospitalist at Lahey Medical Center in Burlington.

The Board reprimanded Dr. Debra M. Little in another Final Decision & Order, after it adopted the parties’ stipulation that Dr. Little provided substandard care to a patient, including failing to obtain or document an adequate medical history, and prescribing without ongoing maintenance or control of the medications. In the stipulation, Dr. Little also admitted that she made false statements to the Board. Dr. Little was first licensed to practice medicine in Massachusetts on September 17, 2008. She currently practices telepsychiatry and is licensed to practice medicine in Michigan.

The Board also reprimanded the inchoate right to renew the medical license of Dr. Geraldine Somers after she admitted in a Consent Order that she created progress reports on two dates indicating that she had examined a patient’s abdomen when she had not done so. Dr. Somers was licensed to practice medicine in the Commonwealth from September 6, 1989 until she entered into a Voluntary Agreement Not to Practice Medicine on September 28, 2017. Dr. Somers last practiced medicine for the Massachusetts Partnership for Correctional Healthcare.

Finally, in a Consent Order, the Board admonished Dr. Ira Helfand after he admitted that he did not meet the standard of care for controlled substance prescribing for two patients. Dr. Helfand has been licensed to practice medicine in Massachusetts since June 18, 1981. He last practiced medicine in a private practice in Springfield in May 2021.

The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine licenses more than 40,000 physicians, osteopaths and acupuncturists. The Board was created in 1894 to protect the public health and safety by setting standards for the practice of medicine and ensuring that doctors who practice in the Commonwealth are appropriately qualified and competent. The Board investigates complaints and determines sanctions. More information is available at www.mass.gov/massmedboard, or you may contact the Board at borimmedia@massmail.state.ma.us .