



1 waiver, express or implied, of the Board's statutory authority or jurisdiction regarding any  
2 other pending or future investigation, action or proceeding. The acceptance of this  
3 Consent Agreement does not preclude any other agency, subdivision or officer of this  
4 State from instituting other civil or criminal proceedings with respect to the conduct that is  
5 the subject of this Consent Agreement.

6 6. All admissions made by Respondent are solely for final disposition of this  
7 matter and any subsequent related administrative proceedings or civil litigation involving  
8 the Board and Respondent. Therefore, said admissions by Respondent are not intended  
9 or made for any other use, such as in the context of another state or federal government  
10 regulatory agency proceeding, civil or criminal court proceeding, in the State of Arizona or  
11 any other state or federal court.

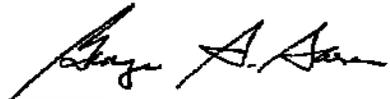
12 7. Upon signing this agreement, and returning this document (or a copy thereof)  
13 to the Board's Executive Director, Respondent may not revoke the acceptance of the  
14 Consent Agreement. Respondent may not make any modifications to the document. Any  
15 modifications to this original document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

17 8. If the Board does not adopt this Consent Agreement, Respondent will not  
18 assert as a defense that the Board's consideration of this Consent Agreement constitutes  
19 bias, prejudice, prejudgment or other similar defense.

20 9. This Consent Agreement, once approved and signed, is a public record that  
21 will be publicly disseminated as a formal action of the Board and will be reported to the  
22 National Practitioner Data Bank and to the Arizona Medical Board's website.

23 10. If any part of the Consent Agreement is later declared void or otherwise  
24 unenforceable, the remainder of the Consent Agreement in its entirety shall remain in force  
25 and effect.

1 11. Any violation of this Consent Agreement constitutes unprofessional conduct  
2 and may result in disciplinary action. A.R.S. § § 32-1401(27)(r) (“[v]iolating a formal order,  
3 probation, consent agreement or stipulation issued or entered into by the board or its  
4 executive director under this chapter”) and 32-1451.

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8 GEORGE S. SARA, M.D.

DATED: 9-10-2009

9 **FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

12 2. Respondent is the holder of license number 15912 for the practice of  
13 allopathic medicine in the State of Arizona.

14 3. The Board initiated case number MD-09-0134A after receiving a complaint  
15 regarding Respondent's care and treatment of a forty-five year-old female patient (“SM”).

16 4. On August 22, 2007, SM presented to Respondent for a cervical epidural  
17 steroid injection due to complaints of neck pain. SM had undergone epidural steroid  
18 injections by another physician in the past with improvement in her symptoms.  
19 Respondent evaluated SM and subsequently performed the cervical injection in an attempt  
20 to control SM's pain. SM was sedated for the procedure using the general anesthesia  
21 propofol. Respondent then administered the injection to SM's cervical spine. Respondent  
22 noted that SM did not complain of pain during or after the procedure; however, there was  
23 no documentation in the operative report as to SM's level of consciousness during the  
24 procedure. There however, was a note that SM was awakened and was discharged.

25 5. Following the procedure, SM experienced left-sided pain that worsened over  
the course of the next few days. SM reported difficulty reaching Respondent following the

1 procedure. In response to the Board's investigation, Respondent stated that he spoke to  
2 SM; however, there was no documentation of the conversation in the record. There also  
3 was no documented follow up, no noted evaluation of the new pain complaints by  
4 Respondent and no documentation that Respondent recognized the symptoms of a  
5 cervical spinal cord injury following an epidural injection.

6 6. SM was evaluated by her primary care physician approximately ten days  
7 later. A September 4, 2007 magnetic resonance imaging scan of the cervical spine  
8 revealed a disc protrusion at the C6-7 level and a linear area of abnormal signal running  
9 from the back to the front of the spinal cord at the same level. There also was edema of  
10 the spinal cord surrounding the tract, which was consistent with a needle being  
11 inadvertently passed through the spinal cord during an epidural injection. SM was  
12 transferred to the hospital and was seen by a neurosurgeon. SM described neurological  
13 deficits and subjective weakness of her left side.

14 7. The standard of care requires a physician to avoid performing a cervical  
15 steroid epidural injection on a patient under general anesthesia, to immediately follow up  
16 on a patient's onset of left-sided pain following a cervical epidural steroid injection and to  
17 recognize cervical spinal cord injury following an attempted epidural injection.

18 8. Respondent deviated from the standard of care because he did not avoid  
19 administering a general anesthesia to SM for a cervical epidural steroid injection, he did  
20 not follow up on SM's onset of left-sided pain following the procedure, and he did not  
21 recognize the injury to the cervical spinal cord from the attempted epidural injection.

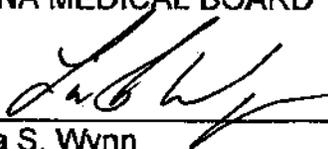
22 9. SM sustained an injury to the cervical spinal cord from an attempted  
23 epidural injection, and this complication could have been treated sooner had Respondent  
24 recognized the signs and symptoms of a spinal cord injury.





ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD

By

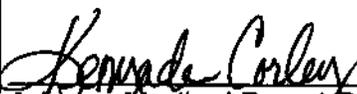
  
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Lisa S. Wynn  
Executive Director

ORIGINAL of the foregoing filed  
this 7 day of October, 2009 with:

Arizona Medical Board  
9545 E. Doubletree Ranch Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85258

EXECUTED COPY of the foregoing mailed  
this 7 day of October, 2009 to:

George S. Sara, M.D.  
Address of Record

  
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Arizona Medical Board Staff