

BEFORE THE
BOARD OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE
STATE OF OREGON

In the Matter of the License of:	Case No. 23-10-35
Dr. Kristie Ritchey ND	NOTICE OF PROPOSED DISCIPLINARY ACTION
Licensee	AND OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING

1.

The Board of Naturopathic Medicine (Board) is the State agency responsible for licensing, regulating, and disciplining naturopathic physicians in the State of Oregon, pursuant to Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) chapter 685 and Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) chapter 850. Dr. Kristie Ritchey, ND (Licensee) has been a licensed naturopathic physician in the State of Oregon since January 2011 and is subject to the jurisdiction of the Board.

2.

The Board hereby proposes to take disciplinary action against Licensee's license to practice naturopathic medicine, on the grounds described in the following paragraphs. For each violation, the Board may impose a civil penalty up to \$5,000, a term of probation, a letter of reprimand and license limitation, suspension, or revocation.

3.

Licensee established care with Patient on / about September 5, 2023. Licensee saw Patient two times in person. Licensee was aware Patient was also seeing a cardiologist (Cardiologist) for Atrial fibrillation (AFib) which is an irregular and often very rapid heart rhythm. AFib can lead to blood clots in the heart. The condition also increases the risk of stroke, heart failure and other heart-related complications.

4.

Licensee saw Patient two times in person, on September 5 and 12, 2023. Patient told Licensee her Cardiologist recently switched her heart medication from Warfarin to Eliquis because it had less perceived side effects. Patient told Licensee Eliquis was very expensive and she could not afford to take Eliquis. Licensee said this conversation happened during one of their office visits, but Licensee did not make a chart note of their conversation.

5.

On or about September 16, Patient called Licensee, explaining she could no longer afford to stay on her prescription of Eliquis, and asked Licensee for a prescription for Warfarin. Warfarin is an anticoagulant [blood thinner]. Warfarin reduces the formation of blood clots. Warfarin is used to treat or prevent blood clots in veins or arteries, which can reduce the risk of stroke, heart attack, or other serious conditions.

6.

After receiving Patient's request, Licensee consulted a Pharmacist on the conversion from Eliquis to Warfarin and wrote Patient the Pharmacist recommended prescription of 4mg of Warfarin. Licensee did not consult Patient's Cardiologist regarding changing the prescription from Eliquis to 4mg of Warfarin. Licensee did not inform Patient's Cardiologist she prescribed Patient 4mg of Warfarin.

7.

Licensee called Patient on September 16, to provide dosage instructions for the Warfarin prescription— half of 4mg tablet for the first two days, and a full tablet from the third day forward. When Licensee wrote the prescription for Patient she set an appointment for International Normalized Ration (INR) and Prothrombin Time (PT) blood test two weeks from the date of the prescription. An INR / PT test measures how well a patient is responding to Warfarin by measuring how fast a blood sample forms a clot. The Patient did not follow through with the blood test as scheduled. Patient was admitted to the hospital on October 18, 2023, where Patient's INR was >10.

8.

Licensee saw Patient two times in person, on September 5 and 12, 2023. Licensee knew Patient was being treated by Cardiologist for Atrial fibrillation (AFib) which is an irregular and often very rapid heart rhythm, which is a serious condition that can cause blood clots in the heart, increases the risk of stroke, heart failure and other heart-related complications. Licensee was aware Cardiologist changed Patient's medication from Warfarin to Eliquis - because it had less perceived side effects. Prior to prescribing, Licensee did not consult with the Cardiologist to learn their basis for changing the prescription, request or receive medical records to discern whether Patient responded to Warfarin or experienced any adverse reactions or side effects while taking Warfarin. Serious side effects are associated with Warfarin, including major or fatal bleeding. Patients taking Warfarin require regular monitoring of INR, because drugs, dietary changes, and other factors affect INR levels achieved with warfarin sodium therapy. Without notification, the Cardiologist was not able to adequately monitor Patient or advise Patient about prevention measures to minimize risk of bleeding and to report signs and symptoms of bleeding. Licensee's failure to consult Patient's Cardiologist regarding changing the prescription from Eliquis to 4mg of Warfarin, and failure to inform Patient's Cardiologist she prescribed Patient 4mg of Warfarin constitutes a violation of 850-050-0010(1)(c)(A) Negligent prescribing.

9.

For the violations described above; the Board proposes the following discipline:

- Reprimand
- Civil Penalty: \$2500

10.

NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING

Licensee is entitled to a hearing as provided by the Administrative Procedures Act (ORS Chapter 183). If you want a hearing, you must file a written request for hearing with the Board within 21 days from the date this notice was mailed. You must submit request for hearing to either via email Naturopathic.Medicine@obnm.Oregon.gov or U.S. Mail to Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine, 800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 407, Portland, OR 97232. The request for hearing must be received by the Board within 21 days from the date of mailing of this notice and must be accompanied by a written answer to the charges contained in this Notice. If a request for hearing is not received within 21 days, the right to hearing is waived.

11.

If you request a hearing, you will be notified of the time and place of the hearing. Before the hearing, you will receive information on the procedures, right of representation, and other rights of parties related to the conduct of the hearing. An administrative law judge from the Office of Administrative Hearings will preside at any hearing. ORS 183.635.

12.

An answer is required to this Notice, pursuant to OAR 850-001-0015, due to the complexity of the matters alleged above. The answer shall be made in writing to the Board and shall include an admission or denial of each factual matter alleged in this Notice, and a short plain statement of each relevant affirmative defense Licensee may have. Except for good cause, factual matters alleged in this notice and not denied in the answer shall be presumed admitted; failure to raise a particular defense in the answer will be considered a waiver of such defense; and new matters alleged in the answer (affirmative defenses) shall be presumed to be denied by the agency and evidence shall not be taken on any issue not raised in the Notice and answer.

13.

If you fail to request a hearing within 21 days, withdraw a request for a hearing, notify the Board or administrative law judge that you will not appear or fail to appear at a scheduled hearing, the Board may issue a final order by default revoking your license. If the Board issues a default order, the contents of the Board's file automatically become part of the evidentiary record of this disciplinary action for the purpose of proving a *prima facie* case.

NOTICE TO ACTIVE DUTY SERVICEMEMBERS: Active-duty service members have a right to stay these proceedings under the federal Service members Civil Relief Act. For more information contact the Oregon State Bar at 800-452-8260, the Oregon Military Department at 503-584-3571 or the nearest United States Armed Forces Legal Assistance Office through <http://legalassistance.law.af.mil>.

DATED this 9 day of January 2025.

BOARD OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

State of Oregon



Mary-Beth Baptista, JD
Executive Director