

**ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF  
MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

**Complainant,**

**vs.**

**CHARLES E. RUNELS, JR. M.D.**

**Respondent.**

) **BEFORE THE MEDICAL LICENSURE  
COMMISSION OF ALABAMA**

) **CASE NO:09-002**

**ORDER**

This matter is before the Medical Licensure Commission on a request by the Respondent, Charles E. Runels, Jr., M.D., to remove restrictions on his license to practice medicine in Alabama. Dr. Runels' license is subject to certain conditions imposed by the Medical Licensure Commission in its Orders dated November 9, 2009 and October 17, 2011. Based upon Dr. Runels' request, and based upon information submitted to the Commission, it is the opinion of the Commission that such request is due to be GRANTED. Accordingly, it is the Order of the Medical Licensure Commission that all restrictions on Dr. Runels' license to practice medicine shall be terminated and he shall henceforth have a full unrestricted license to practice medicine in Alabama.

ENTERED this 31st day of January, 2013.

James E. West, M.D.  
JAMES E. WEST, M.D.  
Chairman, Medical Licensure  
Commission of Alabama

<b>ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF</b>	)	<b>BEFORE THE MEDICAL LICENSURE</b>
<b>MEDICAL EXAMINERS,</b>	)	<b>COMMISSION OF ALABAMA</b>
<b>Complainant,</b>	)	
	)	<b>CASE NO:09-002</b>
<b>vs.</b>	)	
	)	
<b>CHARLES E. RUNELS, M.D.</b>	)	
<b>Respondent.</b>	)	

**ORDER**

This matter is before the Medical Licensure Commission upon a request by the Respondent, Charles E. Runels, M.D., to modify certain provisions of the Commission’s order dated November 9, 2009. One of the conditions placed upon Dr. Runels’ license in such order was that he shall cease the use of hormonal replacement therapy (“HRT”). Dr. Runels has requested that such provision be modified so as to allow him to use thyroid hormone therapy in hypothyroid patients and testosterone therapy in deficient patients, so long as he uses such therapy in a long term care setting.

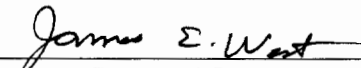
Based on the information provided, the Commission is of the opinion that Dr. Runels’ request is due to be granted. Accordingly, it is the Order of the Medical Licensure Commission that its Order dated November 9, 2009 be amended as follows:

1. Dr. Runels shall cease the use of hormonal replacement therapy (“HRT”). However, Dr. Runels shall be permitted to use thyroid hormone therapy in hypothyroid patients and testosterone therapy in deficient patients, so long as he is practicing in a long term care setting, and so long as he is practicing in accordance with his current practice plan.

2. Dr. Runels’ supervisor, Michael L. Reeves, M.D., CMD, shall be requested to report to the Medical Licensure Commission, quarterly, with regard to Dr. Runels’ use of such therapy, with specific emphasis on his prescribing and follow-up with patients.

3. All provisions of the Commission's Order of November 9, 2009, not herein modified, including, specifically, the requirement that he submit to the Medical Licensure Commission, for its prior approval, a new detailed plan of practice prior to making any change or adding to his scope of practice, shall remain in full force and effect.

ENTERED this 17<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2011.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JAMES E. WEST, M.D.  
Chairman, Medical Licensure  
Commission of Alabama

**ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF  
MEDICAL EXAMINERS**  
Complainant,

vs.

**CHARLES E. RUNELS, JR. M.D.**  
Respondent.

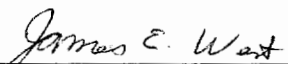
) **BEFORE THE MEDICAL LICENSURE  
COMMISSION OF ALABAMA**

) **CASE NO:09-002**

**ORDER**

This matter is before the Medical Licensure Commission on a request by the Respondent, Charles E. Runels, Jr., M.D., to approve a practice plan, and for permission to pay outstanding administrative costs and fines in installments. The Commission is of the opinion that Dr. Runels' requests are due to be granted. Therefore, it is the Order of the Medical Licensure Commission that the Practice Plan submitted by Dr. Runels, which is attached hereto as "Exhibit A", is approved. It is the further Order of the Medical Licensure Commission that Dr. Runels shall be permitted to pay his outstanding fines and administrative costs at the rate of \$1,750.00 per month for a period of twelve (12) months. The first such payment shall be due and payable on or before January 5, 2011, and additional payments shall be due on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of each month thereafter for a period of twelve (12) months. The final such payment shall be due and payable on or before December 5, 2011.

ENTERED this 30th day of November, 2010.

  
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JAMES E. WEST, M.D.  
Chairman, Medical Licensure  
Commission of Alabama

**CONTINUITY  
HEALTH CARE, INC.**

4212 N. Carmichael Court  
Montgomery, AL 36106  
Phone: (334) 213-8803  
Fax: (334) 213-8815  
1-877-995-9991

Michael L. Reeves, MD, CMD  
Malcolm Brown, MD  
Mukesh Patel, MD  
Pratul Patel, MD  
Dick Owens, MD  
Olu Dawodu, MD  
John MacLennan, MD  
Charlotte Wynn, CRNP  
Alfreida Hogan, CRNP  
Heather Moreland, CRNP  
Vickie Griffith, CRNP  
Lisa Lassiter, CRNP  
Alicia Reeves, CRNP  
Chivers Woodruff, MD  
Brenda Rigsby, CRNP  
Dawn Riols, CRNP

November 9, 2010

**To BME Commission**

I am respectfully submitting a request for consideration of a practice plan for Doctor Charles Runels. I am the president and senior physician member of Continuity Health Care. Our practice involves care of the elderly in nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the state of Alabama. We have a serious need for physicians in the Mobile and Baldwin County area. In discussion with Dr. Runels and his situation with the BME, I am of the opinion that Dr. Runels would be able to provide our group much needed physician support in the nursing homes. He has significant affinity for elder care thru out his practice history. CHC would like to utilize Dr. Runels. He tells me he would be able to work two to three days a week. These two to three days working with us would in turn provide our group with much needed relief, as well as give Dr. Runels the ability to pay his debt to the BME. He would begin to get reimbursements starting in about two months, which should allow him to start making monthly payments to the BME and thereby relieve his debt and return his licensure in the state of Alabama. I respectfully ask that you consider this request and grant CHC and Dr. Runels this ability to satisfy the obligations and give our group the ability to increase our ability to care for the elderly.

Sincerely,



Michael L. Reeves, MD, CMD



ENTERED this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2010.

James E. West  
JAMES E. WEST, M.D.  
Chairman, Medical Licensure  
Commission of Alabama

**ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF  
MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

**Complainant,**

**vs.**

**CHARLES E. RUNELS, JR. M.D.**

**Respondent.**

) **BEFORE THE MEDICAL LICENSURE  
) COMMISSION OF ALABAMA**

) **CASE NO::09-002**

**AMENDMENT TO ORDER**

For good cause shown, it is the order of the Medical Licensure Commission that its Order entered in this case on November 9, 2009 be amended by deleting the requirement that Dr. Runels take a course in medical record keeping offered by Case Western Reserve University. All other provisions of said Order remain in full force and effect.

ENTERED this 18<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2010.

James E. West  
JAMES E. WEST, M.D.  
Chairman, Medical Licensure  
Commission of Alabama



<b>ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS</b>	)	<b>BEFORE THE MEDICAL LICENSURE</b>
<b>Complainant,</b>	)	<b>COMMISSION OF ALABAMA</b>
	)	
<b>vs.</b>	)	<b>CASE NO:09-002</b>
	)	
<b>CHARLES E. RUNELS, JR. M.D.</b>	)	
<b>Respondent.</b>	)	

**ORDER**

This matter is before the Medical Licensure Commission of Alabama on an Administrative Complaint heretofore filed by the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners seeking to discipline Dr. Runels' license to practice medicine in Alabama. A hearing was held on September 23, 2009. Dr. Runels was present, together with his attorney, Stephen M. Middleton, Esq. The Board of Medical Examiners was represented by Hendon B. Coody, Esq.

Based upon evidence presented, the Medical Licensure Commission makes the following finding of fact:

1. An expert medical review of nine (9) of Dr. Runels' patient charts indicated that he has relied on free and total hormone levels to make diagnoses of deficient states of thyroid dysfunction, growth hormone and/or testosterone. Using only such references provides a one sided view of patients' conditions and creates a great probability of physician error.

2. Using only hormone levels, Dr. Runels diagnosed all patients with hypothyroidism. However, if TSH levels had been used, as is recommended by most authorities, only three of nine patients would have been confirmed with hypothyroidism. Despite that fact, however, several of the patients were placed on Armour Thyroid Extract, with no follow-up and, with no documentation of discussions as to possible over-dosage problems.

3. The charts reviewed revealed a clear pattern of hormonal replacement, using growth hormone and testosterone in patients not proven to be deficient and with possible adverse outcomes that were not addressed.

4. The charts reveal a very poor clinical follow-up with patients and cursory, if any, physical examinations performed on patients, with rarely documented vital signs, laboratory data or dates in hand written notes. The clinical record keeping by Dr. Runels is below the standard of care recommended by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists for treating and following patients on multiple hormone replacement regimens.

5. The records reviewed included no documentation of follow-up of TSH levels in patients started on thyroid hormone, as recommended by American Academy of Clinical Endocrinologists and the American Thyroid Association.

Based upon the foregoing findings of fact, the Medical Licensure Commission makes the following conclusions of law:

1. Dr. Runels has practiced medicine in such a manner as to endanger the health of his patients, a violation of Ala. Code §34-34-360(3).

2. Dr. Runels has preformed unnecessary diagnostic tests or medical services, a violation of Ala. Code §34-24-360(11).

Based upon the foregoing findings of fact and conclusions of law, it is the Order of the Medical Licensure Commission that:

1. Dr. Runels shall cease the use of hormonal replacement therapy (HRT).

2. Dr. Runels shall take a course in medical record keeping offered by Case Western Reserve University, within six (6) months of the date of this Order. If such course is not offered within six (6) months, then Dr. Runels shall take the course at the first available opportunity.

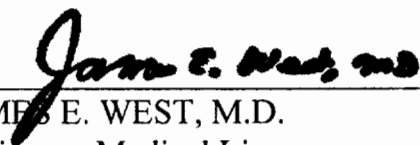
3. Dr. Runels shall submit to the Medical Licensure Commission, for its prior approval, a new detailed plan of practice prior to making any change or adding to his scope of practice.

4. Dr. Runels shall certify to the Commission, in writing, that he has fully read and understands the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners' guidelines for the use of lasers and other modalities affecting living tissue. Such certification shall indicate that he intends to comply fully with such guidelines.

5. Dr. Runels is assessed an administrative fine in the amount of \$5,000.00, such fine to be due and payable within thirty (30) days of this Order.

6. It is the further Order of the Medical Licensure Commission that the Board of Medical Examiners shall submit a bill of its administrative costs pursuant to Medical Licensure Commission Administrative Code 545-X-3-.08(14)(e) within fifteen (15) days of this Order. If no objection is made to such administrative costs within fifteen (15) days of the filing of such cost bill, such costs shall be due and payable by Dr. Runels within thirty (30) days of the filing of such cost bill.

ENTERED this 9<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2009.

  
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JAMES E. WEST, M.D.  
Chairman, Medical Licensure  
Commission of Alabama

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF )  
MEDICAL EXAMINERS, )  
 )  
Complainant, )  
 )  
v. )  
 )  
CHARLES E. RUNELS, JR., M.D. )  
 )  
Respondent. )

BEFORE THE MEDICAL LICENSURE  
COMMISSION OF ALABAMA

CASE NO. 09-002

ORDER SETTING HEARING

The Medical Licensure Commission has received the verified Administrative Complaint of the State Board of Medical Examiners filed in this cause. The Commission has determined that this matter is due to be set down for hearing under the provisions of §34-24-361, Code of Alabama 1975.

Accordingly, it is the Order of the Commission that this matter be set for hearing before the Commission on the 23rd day of September, 2009 at 9:30 o'clock in the A.m. at the offices of the Medical Licensure Commission, 848 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama. The Respondent, CHARLES E. RUNELS, JR., M.D. is directed to respond to the allegations of the verified Complaint in the manner prescribed in Rule 545-X-3-.03 of the Rules and Regulations of the Medical Licensure Commission. Such answer shall be filed **within 20 days** of service of a copy of the Administrative Complaint and the Order Setting Hearing.

This hearing shall be conducted in accordance with §34-24-361(e), Code of Alabama 1975 and Chapter 3 of the Rules and Regulations of the Medical Licensure Commission

concerning hearings in contested cases. The Respondent is entitled to be present at the hearing and to be represented by counsel, is entitled to cross examine witnesses presented by the Complainant, and is entitled to present testimony and other evidence touching on the allegations contained in the Complaint.

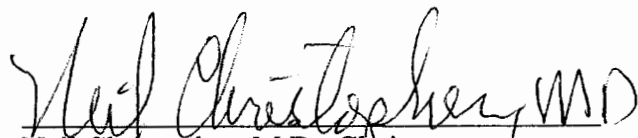
The Honorable Wayne Turner, attorney at law, is hereby appointed to act as Hearing Officer under the authority of Rule 545-X-3-.08 of the Rules and Regulations of the Medical Licensure Commission.

It is the further order of the Commission that a copy of the verified Complaint of the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners and a copy of this Order is forthwith served upon the said CHARLES E. RUNELS, JR., M.D., by personally delivering the same to him if he can be found within the State of Alabama or by overnight courier, signature required, to his last known address if he cannot be found within the State of Alabama. The Commission further directs that personal service of process shall be made by Stan Ingram, who is designated as the duly authorized agent of the Medical Licensure Commission.

The Complainant and Respondent are directed to comply strictly with the Commission's Standing Order and Scheduling Order, which are attached hereto.

It is further ordered that the parties and their attorneys immediately check their calendars for scheduling conflicts. No requests for continuance based upon schedule conflicts of attorneys or parties will be considered unless such request is made prior to August 14, 2009.

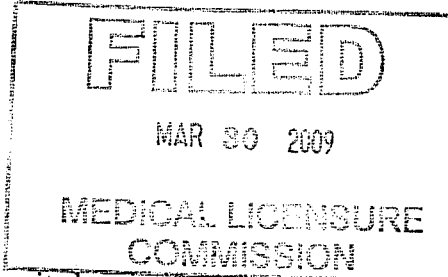
ORDERED at Montgomery, Alabama, this 22nd day April, 2009.

  
Neil Christopher, M.D., Chairman  
Medical Licensure Commission of Alabama

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF )  
MEDICAL EXAMINERS, )  
 )  
Complainant, )  
 )  
vs. )  
 )  
CHARLES E. RUNELS, JR., M. D., )  
 )  
Respondent. )

BEFORE THE MEDICAL LICENSURE  
COMMISSION OF ALABAMA

CASE NO. 09 - 002



ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT

Comes now the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners and submits herein its sworn petition pursuant to the authority of Ala. Code §34-24-361(e)(2002) and respectfully represents to the Medical Licensure Commission the following:

1. On October 25, 1989, the Respondent, Charles E. Runels, Jr., M. D., was licensed to practice medicine in the State of Alabama, having been issued license number MD.14965.
2. The Board of Medical Examiners has conducted an investigation into the medical practice of Dr. Runels and, based on that investigation, has concluded that there exists probable cause to believe that the Respondent has committed the following violations of Ala. Code §34-24-360:
  - a. Practicing medicine or osteopathy in such a manner as to endanger the health of the patients of the practitioner, a violation of Ala. Code §34-24-360(3);
  - b. Gross malpractice or repeated malpractice or gross negligence in the practice of osteopathy, a violation of Ala. Code §34-24-360(9);
  - c. Performance of unnecessary diagnostic tests or medical or surgical services, a violation of Ala. Code § 34-24-360(11);
  - d. Being unable to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety to patients by reason of a demonstrated lack of basic medical knowledge or clinical competency, a violation of Ala. Code §34-24-360(20).

- e. Failure to maintain for a patient a medical record which meets the minimum standards stated in the rules and regulation promulgated by the commission, a violation of Ala. Code §34-24-360 (22);
3. An expert medical review of nine (9) patients' records [7 men and 2 women] revealed that:
- a. Dr. Runels relies on free and total hormone levels to make diagnoses of deficient states of thyroid dysfunction, growth hormone and/or testosterone. These levels have wide ranges of variation in normal individuals and using only these references provides a very "one-sided" view of the patients' conditions and leaves much to physician error.
  - b. In the diagnosis of hypothyroidism, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, the American Thyroid Association and The Mayo Clinic recommend that TSH levels be used instead of absolute thyroid hormone levels as the more accurate reflection of current status. Only three (3) of the nine (9) patients reviewed would have been confirmed with a diagnosis of hypothyroidism, yet seven (7) patients were placed on Armour Thyroid extract, with no follow-up even in the face of adverse effects and no documentation of discussions as to possible over-dosage problems.
  - c. To diagnose and treat Adult Growth Hormone Deficiency Syndrome, Dr. Runels relies on "age adjusted IGF-1 levels"; an inaccurate and inadequate practice according to FDA standards and the national insurance industry standards. Of the nine (9) cases reviewed, only two cases had IGF-1 levels that may arguably suffice for a AGHDS diagnosis, yet all nine (9) were treated with hGH. In a single case, the stimulation test, performed two years after the patient had been treated with hGH, showed normal pituitary function and no evidence of endogenous growth hormone deficiency. Even after these test results were obtained, there is no documentation of Dr. Runels' discontinuing the growth hormone treatment.
  - d. All nine (9) patients were treated with testosterone, even though only four (4) tested positive for low testosterone levels. None of the nine (9) received a complete initial work-up and no assessment on pituitary function was performed. Of the seven (7) men treated, only one had polycythemia before treatment that was never re-checked. Another patient developed polycythemia during treatment, but the dose of testosterone was not altered or discontinued. The two women were massively overdosed, with total testosterone levels of 664 and 531 ng/ml, with a normal range of up to 76 ng/ml.
  - e. Dr. Runels' charts reveal a very poor clinical follow-up with the patients; cursory, if any, physical examinations performed on the patients, with rarely documented

vital signs, laboratory data or dates in the hand-written notes. The clinical record-keeping by Dr. Runels is below the standard of care recommended by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists for treating and following patients on multiple hormone replacement regimens.

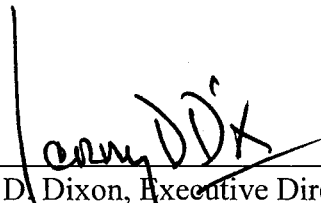
- f. The review of the patient's charts reveals a clear pattern of hormonal replacement using growth hormone and testosterone in patients not proven to be deficient, with adverse outcomes that were not addressed.
- g. The records reviewed included no documentation of follow-up TSH levels in patients started on thyroid hormone, as recommended by American Academy of Clinical Endocrinologists and the American Thyroid Association.
- h. Dr. Runels' prescribing thyroid hormone, testosterone and growth hormone is not an acceptable treatment to induce weight loss in patients, the major focus of treatment according to Dr. Runels' chart notes. Overdosing patients with thyroid hormone, testosterone and growth hormone to achieve weight loss is not justified in the face of the inherent risks.

WHEREFORE, the foregoing premises considered, the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners respectfully requests that the Medical Licensure Commission of Alabama take jurisdiction of this Administrative Complaint, set a hearing thereon, and cause notice of such hearing and a copy of this Administrative Complaint to be served upon the Respondent, Charles E. Runels, Jr., M. D., requiring that he appear and answer the allegations contained in this Administrative Complaint in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Medical Licensure Commission. Further, the Board requests that, at the conclusion of the hearing, the Medical Licensure Commission reprimand the license to practice medicine in Alabama, impose an administrative fine, and place restrictions and limitations on Dr. Runels' use of replacement hormone therapy, and/or take other action which the Commission deems appropriate based upon the evidence presented for consideration.



This Administrative Complaint is executed for and on behalf of the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners by its Executive Director pursuant to the instructions of the Board contained in its Resolution adopted on October 15, 2008, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein.

EXECUTED this the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2009.

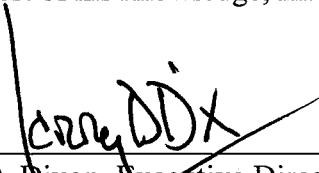
  
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Larry D. Dixon, Executive Director  
Alabama Board of Medical Examiners



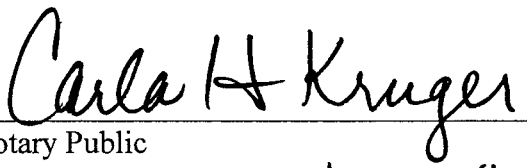
M. Hendon Blaylock, Esq.  
Attorney for the  
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STATE OF ALABAMA            )  
  )  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY        )

Before me, the undersigned, personally appeared Larry D. Dixon, who, being by me first duly sworn, deposes and says that he, in his capacity as Executive Director of the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners, has examined the contents of the foregoing complaint and petition and affirms that the contents thereof are true and correct to the best of his knowledge, information and belief.

  
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Larry D. Dixon, Executive Director  
Alabama Board of Medical Examiners

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me this the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March,  
2009.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public  
My commission expires: 10-1-11

STATE OF ALABAMA )  
 )  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY )

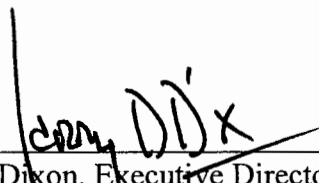
**A F F I D A V I T**

Before me, the undersigned, personally appeared Larry D. Dixon, Executive Director of the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners, who, being by me first duly sworn, deposes and says as follows:


The Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners held session on October 15, 2008, a quorum of the members of the Board being present, and conducted an investigation in to the medical practice of Charles E. Runels, Jr., M.D. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Board adopted the following resolution:

Charles E. Runels, Jr., M.D., Montgomery. The Credentials Committee recommended filing an Administrative Complaint with the Medical Licensure Commission seeking a reprimand, a fine and limitations on the use of replacement hormone therapy in his medical practice on the grounds of practicing medicine in such a manner as to endanger the health of the patients of the practitioner; repeated malpractice or gross negligence in the practice of medicine; performance of unnecessary medical services; being unable to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety of patients by reason of a demonstrated lack of basic medical knowledge or clinical competency; and failure to maintain for a patient a medical records which meets the minimum standards stated in the rules promulgated by the Medical Licensure Commission. The motion was adopted.

I further certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2008.

  
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Larry D. Dixon, Executive Director  
Alabama Board of Medical Examiners

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me this the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March,  
2009.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public  
My commission expires: 10-1-11