

1 BEFORE THE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

2 IN THE STATE OF ARIZONA

3  
4 In the Matter of

5 **STEVEN L. FARRIS, M.D.**

6 Holder of License No. **21916**  
7 For the Practice of Medicine  
In the State of Arizona.

**Investigation Nos. 12615 & 12642**

**CONSENT AGREEMENT, FINDINGS  
OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW  
AND CONSENT ORDER  
(Decree of Censure & Probation)**

8 By mutual agreement and understanding, between the Arizona Board of Medical  
9 Examiners (hereafter "Board") and Steven L. Farris, M.D. (hereafter "Respondent") the  
10 parties agree to the following disposition of this matter.

11 1. Respondent acknowledges that he/she has read this Consent Agreement  
12 and the stipulated Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Consent Order; and, he/she is  
13 aware of and understands the content of this document.

14 2. Respondent understands that by entering into this Consent Agreement for  
15 the issuance of the foregoing Consent Order, Respondent voluntarily relinquishes any  
16 rights to a hearing or judicial review in state or federal court on the matters alleged or to  
17 challenge this Consent Agreement and the Consent Order in its entirety as issued by the  
18 Board and waives any other cause of action related thereto or arising from said Order.

19 3. Respondent acknowledges and understands that this Consent Agreement  
20 and the Consent Order will not become effective until approved by the Board and signed  
21 by its Executive Director.


22 4. All admissions made by Respondent are solely for final disposition of this  
23 matter and any subsequent related administrative proceedings or civil litigation involving  
24 the Board and Respondent. Therefore, said admissions by Respondent are not intended  
25 or made for any other use, such as in the context of another state or federal government

1 regulatory agency proceeding, civil or criminal court proceeding, in the State of Arizona or  
2 any other state or federal court.

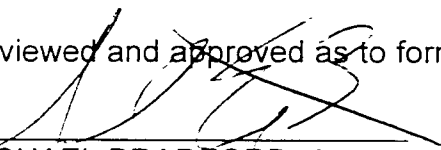
3 5. Respondent acknowledges and agrees that, upon signing this agreement,  
4 and returning this document (or a copy thereof) to the Board's Executive Director,  
5 Respondent may not revoke his/her acceptance of the Consent Agreement and Consent  
6 Order or make any modifications to the document, although the Consent Agreement has  
7 not yet been accepted by the Board and issued by the Executive Director. Any  
8 modifications to this original document are ineffective and void unless mutually approved  
9 by the parties.

10 6. Respondent further understands that this Consent Agreement and Consent  
11 Order, once approved and signed, shall constitute a public record document, which may  
12 be publicly disseminated as a formal action of the Board.

13 7. If any part of the Consent Agreement and Consent Order is later declared  
14 void or otherwise unenforceable, the remainder of the Consent Order in its entirety shall  
15 remain in force and effect.

16  
17   
18 \_\_\_\_\_  
STEVEN L. FARRIS, M.D.

Dated: 2/2/00

19  
20 Reviewed and approved as to form by:  
21   
22 \_\_\_\_\_  
MICHAEL BRADFORD, Attorney at Law  
(Counsel for Dr. Farris)

Dated: 2/15/00

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

4           2.     Dr. Farris is the holder of License No. 21916 for the practice of allopathic  
5 medicine in the State of Arizona.

6           3.     Investigation No. 12615 was initiated when the Board received a complaint  
7 from patient S.S. on March 1, 1999, alleging that her family practice physician, Dr. Farris,  
8 engaged in sexual intimacies with her in July and August of 1998.

9           4.     Investigation No. 12642 was initiated when the Board received information  
10 from Casa Blanca Medical Group that Dr. Farris was suspended from Casa Blanca  
11 Medical Group on February 17, 1999, due to engaging in sexual misconduct with patient  
12 S.S.

13          5.     S.S. is a divorced woman (approximate age 45) who worked as a civilian  
14 schoolteacher in Japan during 1997-1998.

15          6.     In 1994, patient S.S. called the Casa Blanca Medical Group after hours,  
16 when she had been drinking and was very depressed. Dr. Farris was the on-call physician  
17 who answered patient S.S.'s after hours call. From 1994 to 1997, Dr. Farris was the  
18 primary care physician of patient S.S. and treated her for depression, anxiety problems,  
19 and also performed gynecological examinations and counseled her regarding alcohol  
20 abuse. Dr. Farris was aware of her previous suicide attempt and her relationship with a  
21 prior caregiver in Japan. Dr. Farris prescribed the medication Wellbutrin.

22          7.     In August 1997, patient S.S. returned to an overseas duty post in Japan.  
23 She wrote a thank you note to Dr. Farris, who answered her letter and provided an e-mail  
24 address. An e-mail correspondence began between Dr. Farris and patient S.S. At some  
25

1 point, Dr. Farris indicated that he was sexually attracted to patient S.S. and unhappily  
2 married. The e-mails became more explicit over time.

3 8. In June 1998, patient S.S. returned to Arizona. Dr. Farris and patient S.S.  
4 met in late July and engaged in sexual encounters on July 29, 1998 and August 3, 1998.  
5 On August 8, 1998, patient S.S. went to Casa Blanca Medical Clinic for a physical  
6 examination, including Pap smear. Dr. Farris conducted the examination and prescribed  
7 the medications Valium, Ambien, Estratest, and Provera. On August 10, 1998, Dr. Farris  
8 and patient S.S. again had a sexual encounter.

9 9. On August 20, 1998, patient S.S. returned to Sasebo, Japan. The e-mail  
10 correspondence continued until November 13, 1999, when Dr. Farris abruptly terminated  
11 his e-mail address. On November 18, 1998, patient S.S. was airlifted from Sasebo to  
12 Yososuka, Japan for psychiatric care. The consulting psychiatrist attributed patient S.S.'s  
13 depression in part to the death of her parents in 1997-1998 and the loss of a significant  
14 personal relationship, i.e., Dr. Farris. Then, in February 1999, patient S.S. attempted  
15 suicide, which resulted in an emergency air-evacuation and a hospital admission at a U.S.  
16 Naval Hospital in Japan.

17 10. Dr. Farris, during his investigational interview with Board staff on July 23,  
18 1999, admitted to engaging in sexual relations with patient S.S. on days both prior to and  
19 after seeing her as a patient in the office on August 7, 1998. Dr. Farris also admitted to  
20 engaging in sexually explicit correspondence via the Internet with patient S.S.

21 11. This matter was submitted to the Board for review and the Consent  
22 Agreement, Findings Of Fact, Conclusions Of Law And Consent Order was approved  
23 during the Board's public meeting on April 26-28, 2000.

1 CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

2 1. The Board possesses jurisdiction over the subject matter hereof and over Dr.  
3 Farris.

4 2. The conduct and circumstances described above in paragraphs 6 to 10  
5 constitute unprofessional conduct pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1401(25)(z) sexual intimacies  
6 with a patient.

7 3. The conduct and circumstances described above in paragraphs 6 to 10  
8 constitute unprofessional conduct pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1401(25)(q)(any conduct or  
9 practice which is or might be harmful or dangerous to the health of the patient or the  
10 public.)

11 ORDER

12 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

13 1. Dr. Farris is hereby issued a Decree of Censure for his unprofessional  
14 conduct as described above.

15 2. Dr. Farris is placed on five (5) years probation with the following terms:

16 (A) Dr. Farris shall submit to a psychological evaluation by a Board staff  
17 designated psychologist and/or psychiatrist (hereafter, "Board Consultant") within (30)  
18 days from the date of this Order. Dr. Farris shall pay the expense of the evaluation. The  
19 Board consultant shall provide a written confidential evaluation report to the Board or  
20 authorized Board staff. The evaluations and Board consultant report are prepared solely  
21 for the benefit of the Board; and therefore the Board consultant is not treating Dr. Farris as  
22 a patient. Dr. Farris shall authorize the release to the Board or Board consultant, upon  
23 request, all records relating to his previous medical or psychological history.

24 (B) Dr. Farris shall comply with all the Board consultant's  
25 recommendations for continuing care and treatment. If continuing care is recommended,

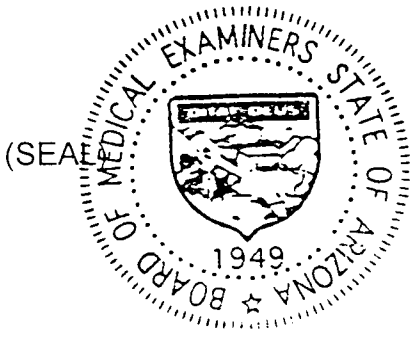
1 Dr. Farris shall instruct his treating psychologist or psychiatrist to submit quarterly written  
2 reports to the Board regarding diagnosis, prognosis, and recommendations for continuing  
3 care and treatment. The reports shall be submitted on or before the 15th day of March,  
4 June, September and December of each year, beginning on or before June 15, 2000. Dr.  
5 Farris shall pay the expenses of all the aforementioned medical or psychological care  
6 recommended; and, he shall be responsible for paying for the preparation of the  
7 aforementioned quarterly reports.

8 3. The Board retains jurisdiction and may initiate new action based upon either  
9 the psychological evaluation or the quarterly written reports.

10 4. This Order is final disposition of Investigation Nos. 12615 and 12642.

11 DATED and effective this 9th day of March, 2000.

BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS  
OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA



By Claudia Foutz  
CLAUDIA FOUTZ  
Executive Director

18  
19 ORIGINAL of the foregoing filed this  
9th day of March, 2000 with:

20 The Arizona Board of Medical Examiners  
21 1651 East Morten, Suite 210  
Phoenix, AZ 85020

22 EXECUTED COPY of the foregoing mailed by  
23 Certified Mail this 9th day of March, 2000 to:

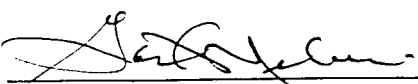
24 Steven L. Farris, M.D.  
P.O. Box 21927  
25 Mesa, AZ 85277-1927

1 EXECUTED COPY of the foregoing mailed  
this 9<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2000, to:

2  
3 Michael Bradford  
4 Attorney at Law  
5 4131 N. 24<sup>th</sup> St., Suite C-201  
6 Phoenix, AZ 85016  
7 (Attorney for Dr. Farris)

8 EXECUTED COPY of the foregoing  
9 hand-delivered this 9<sup>th</sup> day of  
10 March, 2000, to:

11 Michael Harrison  
12 Assistant Attorney General  
13 c/o Arizona Board of Medical Examiners  
14 1651 East Morten, Suite 210  
15 Phoenix, AZ 85020

16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
  
Board Operations