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CORONAVIRUS

Doctor loses license, must have psych evaluation for COVID falsehoods, board says

BY [JULIA MARNIN](#)

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Dr. Meryl J. Nass had her license suspended by a licensing board in Maine after accused of sharing COVID-19 misinformation. She must undergo a psych evaluation. CHARLES REX ARBOGAST AP



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This story was updated Feb. 8 at 3:50 p.m. ET to note Dr. Meryl Nass' hearing date was extended likely until May 10 and that the Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine was unable to comment on whether Nass underwent a neuropsychological examination on Feb. 1, according to its director, Dennis E. Smith.

The original story continues below.

A doctor with decades of experience can't practice medicine after her license was temporarily suspended over complaints that she shared coronavirus misinformation, according to a Maine licensing board.

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The board has ordered her to undergo a neuropsychological evaluation, it said.

Dr. Meryl J. Nass, who got a license to practice medicine in Maine in 1997, had her license “immediately” suspended for 30 days after a board investigation and review of complaints against her on Jan. 12, according to a suspension [order](#) from the Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine.

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Nass, who's an internist in Ellsworth, must "submit" to an evaluation by a "Board-selected psychologist" on Feb. 1, the board's evaluation [order](#) issued Jan. 11 said.

"I have no comment about submitting to a neuropsych exam, except that the board ordered me to do so on shaky grounds," Nass told McClatchy News, adding that she's had her license for a total of 41 years.

"The information received by the Board demonstrates that Dr. Nass is or may be unable to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety to her patients by reason of mental illness, alcohol intemperance, excessive use of drugs, narcotics, or as a result of a mental or physical condition interfering with the competent practice of medicine," the evaluation order states.

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The complaints against Nass include how the board was told she engaged in “public dissemination of ‘misinformation’” about COVID-19 and vaccinations “via a video interview and on her website,” the board said about the October 26, 2021 complaint. It lists several comments Nass made that were subject to the board’s investigation.

Roughly 10 days later, the board got another complaint about Nass “spreading COVID and COVID vaccination misinformation on Twitter,” it said.

Nass called “disinformation and misinformation” a “fuzzy concept” that the board hasn’t defined for her, she said. “There’s no law that says doctors can’t express their educated opinion on any subject.”

Other grounds for her suspension include how Nass treated COVID-19 patients with Ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine, according to the board.

The board noted that Ivermectin isn't Food and Drug Administration "authorized or approved" as a treatment for COVID-19 in the suspension order.

Ivermectin is [used](#) as a parasitic treatment for animals, according to the FDA.

"For humans, ivermectin tablets are approved at very specific doses to treat some parasitic worms, and there are topical (on the skin) formulations for head lice and skin conditions like rosacea," the agency explains online.

Additionally, it noted the FDA "revoked" emergency use authorization for hydroxychloroquine since it "may not be effective" against COVID-19.

Hydroxychloroquine is FDA [approved](#) for malaria and certain autoimmune conditions.



On Dec. 19, a physician notified the board that Nass diagnosed a sick, unvaccinated patient “over the phone” with COVID and prescribed 5 days of Ivermectin,” the board said. This patient had to be hospitalized for COVID-19.

With another patient, Nass is accused of emailing the board about another COVID-19 patient saying she was “forced” to “provide misinformation” in order to obtain hydroxychloroquine.

The board said Nass told them during a Zoom meeting that she “lied and said the patient had Lyme disease and so the pharmacist dispensed the medication only because I lied.”

On Dec. 31, a Certified Nurse Midwife reported that Nass prescribed one of her pregnant patients who tested COVID-19 positive with hydroxychloroquine earlier in 2021, according to the board.

Nass said she believes vaccines are “preventive, but they don’t work anymore against the omicron variant.”

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation’s leading infectious disease expert, says otherwise.

Omicron “will ultimately find just about everybody” Fauci said on Jan. 11, CNN reported. But those who are vaccinated and boosted “will very likely, with some exceptions, do reasonably well in the sense of not having hospitalization and death.”

Unvaccinated individuals are “going to get the brunt of the severe aspect of this,” Fauci said

On her blog, Nass called her license suspension a “witchhunt.”

Nass’ license is suspended until Feb. 11 “pending further Board action at an adjudicatory hearing,” the suspension order said.

She said that this hearing can be “extended by either party.”

Because of her suspension, her practice in Ellsworth was shut down where she said she takes care of chronically ill patients as well as COVID-19 patients. Ellsworth is located about 100 miles east of Augusta.

The board said that her continuing to practice as a physician “constitutes an immediate jeopardy to the health and physical safety of the public who might receive her medical services, and that it is necessary to immediately suspend her ability to practice medicine in order to adequately respond to this risk.”

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