

**Texas Medical Board
Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, May 24, 2010**

Media contact: Public Information Officer Leigh Hopper, 512-305-7018 or
leigh.hopper@tmb.state.tx.us. Non-media contact: (512) 305-7030 or (800) 248-4062.

Medical Board Suspends License of Don Martin O'Neal, M.D., of Sulphur Springs

On May 24, 2010, a panel of the Texas Medical Board suspended the license of Don Martin O'Neal, M.D., of Sulphur Springs, Lic. No. E2769, after determining that Dr. O'Neal's continuation in the practice of medicine presents a continuing threat to public health and safety.

The Temporary Suspension Hearing Without Notice took place under the Board's authority, granted by the Medical Practice Act, to suspend or restrict a physician's license without notice when it determines the physician's continuation in practice would constitute a continuing threat to the public welfare and the physician has the opportunity to have a Temporary Suspension Hearing With Notice at least 10 days after notice of the suspension just taken. The suspension is effective immediately.

The action was based on the following findings: In November 2008, the Drug Enforcement Administration began investigating Dr. O'Neal due to suspicious prescribing. The DEA found Dr. O'Neal had prescribed for 40 to 50 of his patients significant quantities of methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone and benzodiazepines.

In August 2009, in order to avoid further investigation and possible criminal charges, Dr. O'Neal voluntarily surrendered his DEA certificate which had authorized him to prescribe controlled substances.

Dr. O'Neal worked at a clinic called Sulphur Springs Medical-Surgical Clinic, which treats patients at several nursing homes in Sulphur Springs. In January 2010, a colleague of Dr. O'Neal's was reviewing patient charts and discovered that 38 of Dr. O'Neal's 78 patients had controlled drug orders counter-signed using the colleague's signature stamp. The colleague had never authorized O'Neal to use the signature stamp.

On April 13, 2010, Dr. O'Neal was arrested and charged with 33 felony counts alleging fraud for ordering narcotic prescriptions without a valid DEA registration by fraudulently using the license or authorization stamp of another physician. On April 26, 2010, Dr. O'Neal was arrested again and charged with an additional 22 counts alleging fraud for ordering and administering controlled substances without a valid DEA registration.

The length of a temporary suspension is indefinite and it remains in effect until the Board takes further action.