



June 2, 2026

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Bureau of Professional Licensing
Enforcement Division
P.O. Box 30670
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Re: Complaint Concerning Possible Misrepresentation of Physician Licensure Status by Abdul El-Sayed

To Whom It May Concern:

We respectfully request that the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs investigate whether Abdul El-Sayed has violated Article 15 of Michigan’s Public Health Code by repeatedly holding himself out to the public as a “physician” despite potentially not possessing a Michigan physician license.

I. Who We Are

The Center to Advance Security in America (CASA) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the safety and security of the American people. CASA educates and informs the American people about the actions of their government, non-profit organizations, and officials that impact the people’s safety, peace ad security, and civil rights.

II. Background and Analysis

As you may be aware, Abdul El-Sayed, the former director of Wayne County's Department of Health, Human, and Veterans Services has been holding himself out as a practicing physician. According to media reports,¹ Mr. El-Sayed has repeatedly referred to himself publicly as a “physician” and “doctor,” including in campaign appearances, interviews, podcasts, fundraising materials, and professional biographies. The article identifies numerous examples that could reasonably induce members of the public to believe Mr. El-Sayed is or has been licensed to practice medicine, including:

¹ See e.g. Adam Wren and Daniel Lippman, “Michigan Senate Hopeful El-Sayed Calls Himself a ‘Physician’ But Has Little History Treating Patients,” *Politico*, May 12, 2026, <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/05/12/abdul-el-sayed-doctor-physician-00916389>.



- Stating that he has “been in enough codes to watch who really does the work”;
- describing himself as “a physician and epidemiologist”;
- stating “I’ve been a doctor my whole career”;
- publicly appearing while others identified him as a physician without correction;
- stating that he has taken the Hippocratic Oath;
- using campaign imagery depicting himself in a white physician’s coat; and
- maintaining public-facing materials describing himself as a physician.²

Under Michigan law, to be a “physician” one must, among other things, possess “a full and unrestricted license to engage in the practice of medicine issued by a member board.”³ Reporting also states that “according to a review of Michigan and New York state medical records, he’s never been granted a medical license in those states.”⁴ Michigan law prohibits this behavior:

“An individual who is not licensed or registered under this article shall not use an insignia, title, or letter, or a word, letter, or phrase singly or in combination, with or without qualifying words, letters, or phrases, under a circumstance to *induce the belief* that the person is licensed or registered in this state, is lawfully entitled in this state to engage in the practice of a health profession regulated by this article, or is otherwise in compliance with this article.”⁵

We recognize that El-Sayed possesses academic credentials, including an M.D. degree and a doctorate in public health. This complaint is not based upon his use of the honorific “Dr.” in an academic sense. Rather, the concern is whether repeated public representations that he is a “physician” and “doctor” could improperly “induce” the public to believe he is licensed to practice medicine in Michigan.

The representations made by El-Sayed would lead nearly any reasonable person to believe that he is a practicing and licensed physician. First and foremost, under the law, using the word “physician” denotes that one is licensed to practice medicine—which reports indicate he is not. He also called himself a “doctor.” Additionally, he has indicated that he has seen “codes,” implying that he has performed procedures. He has

² Ibid.

³ Mich. Comp. Laws § 333.16189.2(k).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mich. Comp. Laws § 333.16261. (emphasis added).



indicated that he took the Hippocratic Oath. He has done all of this publicly and repeatedly.

Because Article 15 expressly authorizes enforcement against individuals who improperly hold themselves out as licensed professionals, the Department should determine:

1. Whether Mr. El-Sayed presently holds or has ever held a Michigan physician license;
2. Whether his public representations violate MCL 333.16261 or related provisions of Article 15;
3. Whether referral for injunctive or other enforcement proceedings is appropriate; and
4. Whether any criminal provisions of the Public Health Code may be implicated.

Should an investigation determine some or all of these questions in the affirmative, Michigan law authorizes enforcement actions, including injunctive proceedings⁶ or even criminal prosecution.⁷ I respectfully request the Department to take the steps it deems necessary to—at the very least—prevent El-Sayed from continuing to misrepresent himself to the public.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

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⁶ Mich. Comp. Laws § 333.16291.

⁷ Holding oneself out as a practicing health professional without a license is a felony. Mich. Comp. Laws § 333.16294.