



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary*

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### Board of Acupuncture

June 30, 2026

Zechariah H. Choi, L.Ac.  
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Office of the Attorney General  
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natasha.blount@maryland.gov

#### **SENT VIA EMAIL AND REGULAR MAIL**

Re: Acupuncture License No. U02747  
Case No. 26-11

Dear Mr. Choi and Ms. Blount:

On June 17, 2026, the Maryland State Board of Acupuncture issued an Order for Summary Suspension, summarily suspending the acupuncture license held by Zechariah H. Choi, L.Ac., the Respondent, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2)(i).

Pursuant to the Order, on June 29, 2026, the Board held a postdeprivation hearing to show cause why that suspension should not be continued. The Board heard arguments from the Respondent, Zechariah H. Choi, L.Ac., and from the Administrative Prosecutor, Natasha Blount, on behalf of the State. After considering the arguments presented at the Show Cause hearing, the Board decided that the public health, safety, and welfare requires that the June 17, 2026, Order of Summary Suspension be continued and that the acupuncture license held by Dr. Choi shall continue to be suspended. *See* State Gov't, § 10-226(c)(2)(i). The order of summary suspension is thus reaffirmed and continues.

Natasha Blount, Esq., Assistant Attorney General  
Zechariah H. Choi, L.Ac.  
June 30, 2026  
Page 2

### NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

Under the Board regulations, Dr. Choi has the right to request a full evidentiary hearing on the order for summary suspension. To receive the evidentiary hearing, Mr. Choi must file the request for the hearing within **TEN (10)** days of the date of this letter. The request for a hearing should be sent to Tiffany Smith-Williams, Executive Director, at the Board's address. If the hearing is timely requested, the regulations require that an Administrative Law Judge set the hearing to begin within 45 days of the request, COMAR 10.26.04.07G(3), though that 45-day time period may be waived.

Please contact Tiffany L. Smith-Williams, at 410-764-5925 with any questions.

This letter constitutes an order of the Board resulting from formal disciplinary action and is therefore a public document. 10.26.04.07G(9).

Sincerely,



Tiffany L. Smith-Williams, MHS, CPM  
Executive Director

cc: Natasha Blount, AAG, Administrative Prosecutor  
David S. Finkler, AAG, Board Counsel  
Stephanie K. Coley, Deputy Director  
file

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**ZECHARIAH H. CHOI, L.Ac.**

**Respondent**

**License Number: U02747**

**BEFORE THE MARYLAND**

**STATE BOARD OF**

**ACUPUNCTURE**

**Case Number: 26-11**

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**ORDER FOR SUMMARY SUSPENSION OF  
LICENSE TO PRACTICE ACUPUNCTURE**

The Maryland State Board of Acupuncture (the “Board”) hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDS** the license of **ZECHARIAH H. CHOI, L.Ac.** (the “Respondent”), License Number **U02747**, to practice acupuncture in the State of Maryland pursuant to the Maryland Acupuncture Act (the “Act”), Md. Code Ann., Health Occupations (“Health Occ.”) §§ 1A-101 *et seq.* (LexisNexis Supp. 2025). The Board takes such action pursuant to its authority under Md. Code Ann., State Government (“State Gov’t”) § 10-226(c)(2) (LexisNexis Supp. 2025), concluding that the public health, safety, or welfare imperatively requires emergency action. In addition, the Board takes such action pursuant to its authority under Md. Code Regs. (“COMAR”) 10.26.04.07, concluding that there is substantial likelihood that the Respondent poses a risk of harm to the public health, safety, or welfare.

**INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS**

Based on information received by, and made known to the Board, and the investigatory information obtained by, received by and made known to and available to the

Board, including the instances described below, the Board has reason to believe that the following facts are true: <sup>1</sup>

### **BACKGROUND**

1. At all times relevant, the Respondent was and is licensed to practice acupuncture in the State of Maryland. The Respondent initially was licensed to practice acupuncture in Maryland on April 8, 2020, under License Number U02747. The Respondent's license is active and expires on May 31, 2028, subject to renewal.

2. At all times relevant, the Respondent was employed as an acupuncturist at a private establishment (the "Spa")<sup>2</sup> located in Gambrills, Maryland.

### **COMPLAINT**

3. On or about February 5, 2026, the Board received a complaint (the "Complaint") from a patient (the "Patient") who alleged that on September 23, 2025, at 12:00 p.m., the Patient visited the Spa for a scheduled facial and a full-body massage. The Patient stated that the Respondent performed the massage during which he "inappropriately touched my breast and genital region" and "encircled both of his hands around my neck and applied pressure, effectively choking me for approximately 15 seconds." The Patient stated that after she left the Spa, she went directly to a local hospital and had a Computed Tomography ("CT") scan done, which "revealed a right internal carotid artery injury." At

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<sup>1</sup> The statements regarding the investigative findings are intended to provide the Respondent with notice of the basis of the suspension. They are not intended as, and do not necessarily represent, a complete description of the evidence, either documentary or testimonial, to be offered against the Respondent in connection with this matter.

<sup>2</sup> For confidentiality and privacy reasons, the names of patients, clients and health care facilities are not disclosed in this document. The Respondent may obtain the undisclosed names by contacting the assigned Administrative Prosecutor.

the hospital, the Patient also contacted the Anne Arundel County Police Department and later reported the incident at a police station.

4. After receiving the Complaint, the Board initiated an investigation of the Respondent.

### **BOARD INVESTIGATION**

5. The Board's investigation revealed that on or about September 22, 2025, the Patient scheduled a facial and a full-body massage at the Spa for September 23, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. through the Spa's website. The Patient had been going to the Spa for full-body massages approximately every six months for approximately the past fourteen years.<sup>3</sup> When scheduling the facial and full-body massage, the Patient did not specify any provider.

6. On or about September 23, 2025, the Patient visited the Spa at approximately 12:00 p.m. for her facial and full-body massage. Initially, the Patient received a facial from another employee of the Spa with which she was pleased. After the facial, the Patient was escorted to a changing room where she changed into a robe and slippers. The Patient was then escorted to a waiting room.

7. The Respondent entered the waiting room and escorted the Patient to a room on the second floor. The Patient had never received a massage from the Respondent throughout her prior visits to the Spa. Once in the room, the Respondent instructed the Patient to lay face-down on a massage table, and the Patient complied. The Patient was naked with a sheet partially covering her body. Prior to instructing the Patient, the Respondent did not speak with the Patient or ask her any questions regarding the type of

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<sup>3</sup> Records from the Spa showed the Patient's previous visit to the Spa was on May 8, 2025.

massage she wanted or any specific areas of the body she wanted the Respondent to focus on.

8. Instead of performing a full-body massage as the Patient requested, the Respondent began to perform acupressure<sup>4</sup> on the Patient utilizing the Tui Na method.<sup>5</sup> The Respondent began by performing acupressure on the Patient's upper back, both arms and lower back. While performing the acupressure, the Respondent failed to properly tuck the sheet underneath the Patient's body; thus, at times exposing the Patient's naked body. As the Respondent was working on the Patient's arms, he caressed the side of the Patient's breasts with the palm of his hands which made the Patient uncomfortable.

9. Next, the Respondent had the Patient in a supine position with the sheet partially covering the front side of the Patient's body. The Respondent began performing acupressure on the Patient's legs up to the side of her hip area. As the Respondent was performing acupressure on the Patient's leg and the side of her hip area, the Respondent's hand touched the Patient's pubic hair.

10. The Respondent then went behind the Patient and began performing acupressure on the Patient's shoulder area. After finishing the shoulder area, the Respondent used his forearm to perform acupressure on the Patient's neck area. While working on the Patient's neck area, the Respondent used both his hands and squeezed the

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<sup>4</sup> Acupressure is a Traditional Chinese Medicine technique that involves applying manual pressure to specific points on the body to stimulate healing and energy flow, and to relieve pain, stress, and nausea.

<sup>5</sup> Tui na (pronounced "twee-nah") is an ancient therapeutic form of Chinese bodywork. By utilizing the same meridian and acupressure principles as acupuncture, practitioners use a combination of kneading, rolling, and pushing motions to stimulate energy flow (Qi), relieve muscle tension, and promote natural healing.

Patient's neck for approximately fifteen seconds. During the fifteen seconds, the Patient began to experience blurred vision and had trouble breathing. The Patient tried to sit up several times but was unsuccessful. After approximately fifteen seconds, the Respondent released his hands, told the Patient he was not finished and left the room.

11. After the Respondent left the room, the Patient quickly put on her robe, left the room and headed toward the elevator. The Respondent followed her and told the Patient that the reason he spent so much time on her armpits and pelvis was because she "had so much lymphatic drainage."

12. The Patient changed her clothes in the changing room and paid for the facial and full-body massage at the front desk. When a receptionist asked about the Patient's experience with the massage, the Patient disclosed what the Respondent did. The Patient declined to talk to the Spa manager and drove directly to a local hospital emergency department.

13. At the emergency department, the Patient underwent a CT scan of her neck, which showed right carotid artery injury. In the Patient's discharge summary from the emergency department, she was diagnosed with "recent traumatic injury; Narrowing of artery in neck." After leaving the emergency department, the Patient drove to an Anne Arundel County Police Department station and filed a report regarding the incident.

14. The Respondent was criminally charged and on April 17, 2026, indicted in the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, Maryland under *State of Maryland vs. Zechariah Heebong Choi*, Case Number C-02-CR-26-000603 with 1) Assault in the Second Degree; 2) Sexual Offense in the Fourth Degree – Sexual Contact; and 3) Practicing

Massage Therapy Without a License. As of the date of this Order for Summary Suspension of License to Practice Acupuncture, the criminal charges against the Respondent are pending.

### **CONCLUSION OF LAW**

Based on the foregoing investigative findings, the Board finds that the public health, safety, or welfare imperatively requires emergency action in this case pursuant to State Govt. § 10-226(c)(2).

In addition, the Board concludes as a matter of law that there is a substantial likelihood that the Respondent poses a risk of harm to the public health, safety, or welfare, pursuant to COMAR 10.26.04.07.

### **ORDER**

Based on the foregoing, it is by a majority of the Board considering this case:

**ORDERED** that pursuant to the authority vested by State Gov't § 10-226(c)(2), the Respondent's license to practice acupuncture in the State of Maryland under License Number **U02747**, is hereby **SUMMARILY SUSPENDED**; and it is further

**ORDERED** that during the course of the summary suspension of his license, the Respondent shall not practice acupuncture in the State of Maryland; and it is further

**ORDERED** that in accordance with COMAR 10.26.04.07, a post-deprivation show cause hearing on the summary suspension of the Respondent's license will be held via Google Meet (meeting link: **meet.google.com** [REDACTED]) on **Monday, June 29, 2026 at 3p.m.**; and it is further

**ORDERED** that at the conclusion of the post-deprivation hearing before the Board, the Respondent, if dissatisfied with the result of the hearing, may request within ten (10)



days an evidentiary hearing, such hearing to be set within forty-five (45) days of the request: and it is further

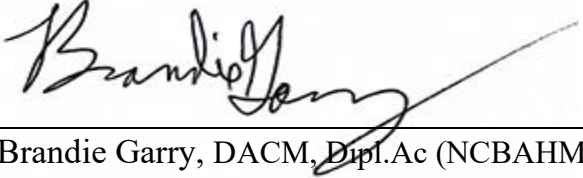
**ORDERED** that on presentation of this Order, the Respondent **SHALL SURRENDER** to the Board, the following items:

- (1) The Respondent's original Maryland Licensed Acupuncture License **U02747**;
- (2) The Respondent's wallet card and wallet license;
- (3) Any other documentation of licensure from the Board; and it is further

**ORDERED** that this Order for Summary Suspension shall remain in effect and the summary suspension of the Respondent's license to practice as a Licensed Acupuncturist in the State of Maryland License Number **U02747** shall continue until further Order of the Board; and it is further

**ORDERED** that this is an Order of the Board and as such is a **PUBLIC RECORD** pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. § 4-101 *et seq.* (LexisNexis 2021).

June 17, 2026  
Date

  
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Brandie Garry, DACM, Dipl.Ac (NCBAHM),  
L.Ac  
LPN, BSN, Clinical Acupuncturist  
Board Chair  
Maryland State Board of Acupuncture