
NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue 1

January, 1995

INAUGURAL ISSUE!

Welcome.

The Board of Registration in Medicine is pleased to present this first biannual newsletter. The newsletter will serve to inform licensees and the public of activities and functions of the Board.

The Board hopes that through enhanced communication, it will be better able to fulfill its mission of ensuring the public of the highest level of medical care.

We are in a time of great changes in healthcare, the final outcome of which is still uncertain. With that, there are significant economic pressures for better managed medical care.

The greatest fear to patients, however, is the potential erosion of the quality of medical care to which they have been accustomed. The Board of Registration in Medicine is committed to preserving the highest standards of professionalism among the practitioners whom it licenses. The citizens of New Hampshire deserve no less and this should not be diluted by economic considerations.

Albert M. Drukteinis, MD, JD
President



Board of Registration in Medicine

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ABOUT THE BOARD

Board Members:

Albert M. Drukteinis MD, JD
President **Manchester**

Lawrence W. O'Connell PhD
Vice President **Durham**

Marcel R Dupuis MD **Manchester**

Maureen P Knepp PA-C **Nashua**

Robert C Charman MD **Lebanon**

Cynthia S Cooper, MD **Dover**

The Board of Registration in Medicine consists of 7 members, 5 physicians, 1 paramedical professional and 1 public member, who are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Executive Council. The members of the Board are appointed to a 5 year term and may serve no longer than two terms. At present the Board is awaiting a gubernatorial appointment to replace Dr.

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Wallace Buttrick, MD who passed away in June, 1994.

The Board was established by the General Court in 1915 with the enactment of the Medical Practice Act, RSA 329. The Board is charged with the responsibility for setting the minimum standard of medical training and proficiency necessary to practice medicine in New Hampshire. Anyone who is granted a license to practice medicine must continue to meet the minimum standards for competent and ethical practice. If, for any reason, a licensee fails to meet these standards, the Board is required to take disciplinary action against the license.

Currently 3,384 physicians are licensed in the state of New Hampshire. Of those, 2,522 are practicing within the state.

The Board is also responsible for the licensure and discipline of :

- Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants
- Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapist Assistants
- Respiratory Care Practitioners
- Physician Assistants
- Athletic Trainers (Jan.1995)

Each of these allied health professions is regulated under its own practice act and maintains an advisory committee to the Board of Registration in Medicine. There are more than 2,500 allied health professionals licensed by the board.

ATTENTION PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS!

A public hearing will be held on Wed., March 1, 1995 at 10:00 am for comment on the proposed changes to the PA rules.

Disciplinary Actions

1994

Stephen O. Dell, M.D.,
Reinstatement of License Denied based on finding of gross and repeated negligence in the practice of medicine.

Thomas F. Milligan, M.D.,
Temporary License granted with restrictions. Restrictions include urine monitoring for controlled substance abuse, practice location, continuing education and prescriptive authority.

Robert C. Jones, PA, - Settlement
Agreement for temporary license pending passage of national re-certifying examination.

Dennis Keifer, PA, - Settlement
Agreement for temporary license pending passage of national re-certifying examination.

Vincent Lambert, M.D.,
Settlement Agreement - Voluntary Surrender of License in lieu of disciplinary investigation.

George Griffin, M.D., Settlement Agreement - Voluntary Surrender of License in lieu of further disciplinary action based on allegations of billing irregularities.

James P. Theofrastous, M.D.,
License Suspended for 5 years, fine imposed based on finding of sexual misconduct involving a patient.

Thomas F. Milligan, M.D.,
Temporary license revoked based on violation of restrictions.

Donald W. Clark, M.D.,
Settlement Agreement - Reprimand, fine and continuing education imposed based on improper prescribing practices.

Donald Brian Shea, M.D.,
Conditional Approval of Resident License. Monitoring imposed.

NEWSLETTER LICENSURE CHANGES

The application process for licensure as a physician is designed to screen all candidates for compliance with minimum education, examination and experience standards, for independent confirmation of identification and credentials and for verification of possible disciplinary history. The license, once granted, offers the public the assurance that a physician has met the state's minimum criteria for competence.

Recently the Board has instituted the following changes to the process.

- Routine personal interviews for all applicants have been eliminated.
- The commitment to practice in New Hampshire can be full-time, part-time, or even occasional.
- Notarized copies of most documents will no longer be accepted. Original source verification of medical degree, and post-graduate training are required.
- Verifications of all licenses, past or present, will be required.
- Explanation of all malpractice actions against the applicant, whether active or inactive, is required.

As always, the application process must be undertaken well in advance of any plans to practice. Upon receipt of a completed application, the Board will commence an independent background investigation that will take from 4 to 6 weeks. If an applicant has a history of

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disciplinary action or numerous malpractice suits, the background investigation will require up to 4 months to complete. If you are recruiting new physicians, please encourage them to apply for licensure as soon as possible in order to avoid any delay in commencing practice.

ANNUAL RENEWAL

JUNE 30, 1995

Annual renewal applications will be mailed to all licensees at the end of April, 1995. In order to renew all licensees must:

- File any required continuing medical education documentation with the New Hampshire Medical Society
- Complete the renewal application. (Be sure to answer every question.)
- Enclose the renewal fee (\$100) with the completed renewal application.
- Enclose a complete explanation for any question which is answered in the affirmative.
- Return the application before June 30, 1995.

REMEMBER:

You must keep the Board informed of all changes in your business or personal address. If your correct address is not on file by April 1, 1995, your renewal application will not be received in time and no further notification will be sent.

Your license is your authorization to practice medicine. It is the personal responsibility of each physician to ensure that it is currently valid.

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

Each month the Board of Registration in Medicine receives an average of 7 letters of complaint from patients who believe that the treatment they received from a licensed physician was substandard or unprofessional.

Additionally the Board receives information from many other sources which may include allegations of unethical or substandard care including:

- Notice of all malpractice actions filed in New Hampshire
- Notice of all claims reserved on behalf of a licensee
- Notice of all disciplinary actions taken by a New Hampshire licensed hospital
- Pharmacy, Drug enforcement or Law enforcement agency actions.

All information is screened by the Board to determine if a violation of RSA 329 is alleged.

If grounds for further investigation are found, the Board refers the matter to the Medical Review Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is chaired by a member of the Board and comprised of 3 physicians and one member of the public.

The committee will usually request that the licensee review the complaint and comment on the allegations. The relevant medical records will be subpoenaed. This initial information will be reviewed by the subcommittee and further information, as necessary, will be requested.

Once all the relevant information has been gathered, the

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subcommittee will make a recommendation to the board to either commence a formal investigation or to file the matter in the event that further information becomes available.

If a notice of formal investigation, or a notice of disciplinary hearing is issued by the Board, the matter becomes subject to public disclosure.

If the matter is filed, it is considered to be "closed" with the understanding that the complaint may be reopened in the event that further information becomes available. In this case the physician and complainant are notified and no further action is taken by the board at that time.

During fiscal year 1994:

88 Consumer Complaints were filed with the Board.

65 Malpractice Suits were reported by New Hampshire Courts.

9 Investigations were initiated by miscellaneous referral sources.

REMINDER

All licensees of the Board of Registration in Medicine are subject to the requirements of RSA 329, The Medical Practice Act and the Administrative Rules of the Board. Each applicant was furnished a copy of these at the time of their application for licensure. Ignorance of the law and regulations do not constitute a valid defense if any physician violates the provisions of the law.

If you have not received a copy of RSA 329 or the administrative rules of the Board, please contact the office. Copies of the Law and Rules can be purchased for a copying cost of \$.25 per page.