STATE MEMBER BOARD BRIEFS

Prior to the new NDPAP, the Board had operated a confidential physician health program to address physician health issues for the last two decades. The new program was made possible by legislative changes sought by the Board in 2013, allowing the formation of an independent entity that would continue the former program and enhance it through the addition of new medical and clinical staff.

The NDPAP will be a member of the Federation of State Physician Health Programs.

In its most recent online newsletter, the Board said part of its motivation in creating the new program was that “the separation of the program operation from the licensing board would make it easier for the family and colleagues of physicians and physician assistants with health issues to make confidential referrals earlier in the disease process, before there was a threat of impairment.”

“The safety of the public will be maintained by the assurance that any practice-related violations will be reported promptly to the medical board, and strengthened through earlier identification, intervention and treatment of potentially impairing conditions,” it said.

The NDPAP has hired Tammy King as its executive director and Barrie March, MD, as its medical director.

Today, the OMB consists of 12 board members and oversees over 18,000 professionals, including medical and osteopathic physicians, podiatric physicians, physician assistants, and acupuncturists. The Board is also responsible for establishing the scope of practice for Emergency Medical Services Providers.

In a news article about its 125th anniversary, the Board wrote that since 1889, it “has been responsible for regulating the practice of medicine in Oregon through licensing, investigation, and discipline in order to fulfill its mission of protecting the health, safety, and well-being of Oregon citizens. It is privileged to work with Oregon’s physicians, physician assistants and acupuncturists, who constitute one of the finest groups of health care professionals in the country, in helping support this mission.”

Source: Oregon Medical Board Report, Vol. 126, No. 2, 2014

West Virginia

New Legislation in West Virginia Clarifies Rules for Medical and Podiatry Corporations, Physician Assistants

Two bills with significant impact on medical regulation in West Virginia, both supported by the West Virginia Board of Medicine (WVBM), were recently passed by the state legislature there.

House Bill 4278 updates sections of the West Virginia Medical Practice Act that govern medical corporations and delineate WVBM’s role in the issuance of certificates of authorizations to medical corporations. This bill clarifies the mechanism by which a domestic medical corporation or podiatry corporation may obtain a certificate of authorization to practice medicine in West Virginia through licensed physicians and podiatrists.

The bill also authorizes the issuance of certificates of authorization under specific circumstances to physician-owned corporations formed in other

Source: The Examiner, newsletter of the North Dakota State Board of Medical Examiners, August 2014

Oregon

Oregon Medical Board Celebrates Historical Milestone

The Oregon Medical Board (OMB) is celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2014. Established in 1889, the Board originally consisted of three board members and monitored only medical physicians.
states who wish to practice medicine in West Virginia through the corporation.

Under provisions of the new legislation medical and podiatry corporations formed in other states are authorized to practice in West Virginia when they are fully physician and/or podiatrist owned; authorized to practice medicine, surgery or podiatry in its state of incorporation and such authorization is in good standing; their corporate ownership includes at least one physician or podiatrist licensed in West Virginia; and they designate a West Virginia licensed physician or podiatrist shareholder for all communications with the board regarding the designation and continuing authorization of the corporation as a foreign medical/podiatry corporation.

The second bill of major importance to be passed in West Virginia is **SB 425**, known as the Physician Assistants Practice Act.

The bill was proposed in close collaboration between WVBM and the state’s Board of Osteopathic Medicine in an effort to clarify rules for the licensing and regulation of the practice of physician assistants (PAs) who work under the supervision of physicians.

The bill creates a separate article that allows both boards a shared legal platform from which to license and regulate PAs in a uniform manner. In doing so, sections of the state’s Medical Practice Act related to PAs have been repealed and replaced by the new law.

The Physician Assistants Practice Act modernizes the licensure and regulation of PAs by the WVBM and the Board of Osteopathic Medicine. It permits PAs to obtain licensure prior to finding employment, prohibits them from practicing without an approved practice agreement on file with the regulatory boards and authorizes them to practice under volunteer licenses/endorsements. The bill does not modify in any way the established scope of practice for PAs.

Previous law permitted a physician to supervise up to three PAs at a time. The new law has increased this limit to five. The bill also streamlines the administrative application process for PAs, including making it possible in many cases, for proposed practice agreements to be reviewed and approved by the boards without the need to await their next scheduled meeting.

The new law also clarifies in its language that PAs are afforded the same due process and procedural protections as physicians and podiatrists in the licensure disciplinary process, and that they may be subject to the same disciplinary penalties for the same professional conduct violations.

To learn more about either of the bills, please visit www.wvbom.wv.gov.

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**THE BILL WAS PROPOSED...IN AN EFFORT TO CLARIFY RULES FOR THE LICENSING AND REGULATION OF THE PRACTICE OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS (PAS) WHO WORK UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF PHYSICIANS.**

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Source: *West Virginia Board of Medicine Quarterly Newsletter*, Spring/Summer 2014