

March 2011 |

Department of Labor and Industry, Business Services Division

Exhibit No. 1Date 3/14/2011Bill No. HB 25

HB 25

Board of Medical Examiners

Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Safety

Presented by: Mary Anne Guggenheim, M.D.

Professional Assistance Program Facts

- The Board of Medical Examiners has established a professional assistance program to assist and rehabilitate licensees who are found to be physically or mentally impaired as authorized under 37-3-203, MCA.
- The program services are delivered through a contract with the Montana Professional Assistance Program (MPAP).
- About 30 % of referrals to the professional assistance program are from the Board. Most referrals are either a self-referral or from spouse, from a colleague or employer.
- There are disciplinary and nondisciplinary tracks. Ensuring confidentiality is key to individuals seeking assistance. However, any licensee in the nondisciplinary track who breaks their MPAP contract is reported to the Board.
- MPAP participants are typically monitored for five years.

2009 Audit Highlights

Performance audit completed in 2009 by independent expert noted that MPAP ranks among top in nation related to outcomes, its range of referral sources, and competence. Audit noted 88 % of physicians successfully completed program.

MPAP Program Activity

- Active medical participants: 44 of which 12 are known to Board
- 47 medical referrals in 2010.
- Consultations on applications: 15 out-of-state physician applicants and 16 EMT applicants referred for MPAP consultation.

Board Members

Emergency Medical Technician

Ryan Burke, EMT-P

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Nutritionist

Pat Bollinger, MS RD

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Physicians

Dean Center, MD

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Anna Earl, MD

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Physician Assistant

Dwight Thompson, PA-C

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Podiatrist

Nathan Thomas, DPM

Missoula • 406/542-2108

Public Members

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MT Academy of PAs Liaison

Kay Bills-Kazimi, PA

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Board Office

Jean Branscum, Executive Director

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Board Quick Facts

- License and regulate acupuncturists, emergency medical technicians, nutritionists, physicians, residents, telemedicine physicians, physician assistants and podiatrists
- 9,923 active licensees
- Licensed 474 individuals in 2010
- Receive about 170 complaints each year.
- Takes an average of 30 days to get a license to practice medicine in Montana
- Board consists of 13 members. 12 Board members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. One member is selected by the Montana Academy of Physician Assistants.
- Board members serve staggered four year terms

Board Contact Information

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What is a State Medical Board?

The Montana Board of Medical Examiners' primary responsibility and obligation is to protect health care consumers through proper licensing and regulation of physicians, telemedicine physicians, residents, physician assistants, podiatrists, nutritionists, acupuncturists and emergency medical technicians.

The ability to practice in one of the licensed occupations is not an inherent right of an individual, but a privilege granted by the people of a state acting through their elected representatives. The public is protected from the unprofessional, improper and incompetent practice through laws and regulations. It is the duty of the Board of Medical Examiners to regulate the practice.

Medical Board Structure

Board membership is composed of volunteers who are charged with upholding the practice acts. Twelve voting members are appointed by the governor and one nonvoting member is selected by the Montana Academy of Physician Assistants. Most occupations licensed and regulated by the board have a representative member with the exception of acupuncturists.

The board is attached for administrative purposes to the Department of Labor and Industry. Funding comes from licensing fees. Any fines imposed are deposited into the general fund. There are six licensing and program staff, including an executive director.

Licensure

Assembling a quality health care workforce to meet the needs of the public begins with licensure. Through the licensure process, the state ensures that individuals have appropriate education and training, and that they abide by recognized standards of professional conduct.

Regulation

The board is charged with the responsibility of evaluating when a licensee's professional conduct or ability to practice medicine warrants modification, suspension or revocation of the license to practice. Board members meet on a monthly basis, devoting hours of time and attention, to oversee the practice by reviewing complaints from consumers, information from hospitals and other health care institutions, and reports from government agencies. The board has the power to further investigate a complaint and can impose some form of discipline, such as mandated continuing medical education, medical treatment, or seek to restrict, suspend or revoke a license.

*The duty of the board goes beyond licensing and regulation.
We are obligated to protect health care consumers.*