

Department of Commerce, Community  
and Economic Development

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Division of Corporations, Business  
and Professional Licensing

## **Alaska State Medical Board**

### **Annual Report**

Fiscal Year 2023



Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

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Alaska State Medical Board  
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**Identification of the Board**

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Duty Station</b>	<b>Date Appointed</b>	<b>Term Expires</b>
<b>David Barnes, DO</b> Physician	Palmer	March 22, 2023	March 1, 2024
<b>Sarah Bigelow Hood</b> Physician Assistant	Anchorage	March 1, 2021	March 1, 2025
<b>Maria Freeman, MD</b> Physician	Wasilla	June 26, 2020	March 1, 2024
<b>Matt Heilala, DPM</b> Physician	Anchorage	November 16, 2021	March 1, 2026
<b>Lydia Mielke, Secretary</b> Public Member	Big Lake	March 1, 2021	March 1, 2025
<b>David Paulson, MD</b> Physician	Anchorage	May 25, 2022	March 1, 2024
<b>Richard Wein, MD, Chair</b> Physician	Sitka	March 1, 2020	March 1, 2024
<b>David Wilson</b> Public Member	Palmer	January 12, 2022	March 1, 2024

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**Identification of Staff**

**Natalie Norberg – Executive Administrator**

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**Identification of Staff (continued)**

**Angel Romero – Investigator**

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**Narrative Statement**

The Alaska State Medical Board (ASMB) is responsible for protecting the public through the licensing, regulation, and discipline of allopathic and osteopathic physicians, podiatrists, and physician assistants. The board establishes and evaluates competency standards for applicants to practice medicine in Alaska.

The board met 10 times in FY 2023 to review and approve approximately one thousand license applications and address a busy platform of issues related to policy and regulatory reform.

During FY 2023 (July 1, 2022, through June 20, 2023), the board issued 960 licenses, including:

- 721 allopathic physicians
- 124 osteopathic physicians
- 3 podiatrists
- 29 residents
- 5 locum tenens
- 76 physician assistants
- 2 military courtesy licenses

Highlights from FY2023:

SB 55, relating to the extension of the medical board for eight more years passed the legislature in the spring of 2023 and was approved by the Governor on June 16, 2023. The successful transmission of this bill was due to the cooperative effort of the board, staff and the legislative audit team. Eight years represents the maximum extension time a board can receive.

After numerous special meetings and extensive input from stakeholders, the board approved broad draft changes to Article 5, pertaining to the licensure and scope of practice for physician assistants. The intent of this action was to initiate a formal regulation project to involve further revisions after legal review and public input with the aim to review and modernize physician assistant practice.

The board issued a statement to create an alternative definition for "life threatening condition." A new telehealth law in 2022 established the ability for patients to qualify for telemedicine encounters with a physician not licensed in Alaska, if Alaska patient has a pre-existing relationship with the physician practicing by telemedicine or the patient is experiencing a life-threatening condition. AS 08.01.085 (j) (3), defines "life threatening" to mean "any disease or condition from which the likelihood of death is probable unless the course of the disease or condition is interrupted." Being responsive to public testimony, the board identified this definition as too limited. The board adopted an alternative definition for "life-threatening" to also include conditions for which the patient's primary care provider has evaluated and determined a need for a medical specialist to evaluate and treat the patient, and there are no such qualified medical specialists available to the patient, within a reasonable amount of travel time, who are practicing in the patient's geographic location in Alaska.

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**Budget Recommendations for FY 2024**

Budget Recommendations section anticipates the board’s fiscal priorities for the upcoming year. Please complete all parts of this section with details about anticipated meetings, conferences, memberships, supplies, equipment, to other board requests. Meeting expenses that are being funded through third-party reimbursement or direct booking must be identified separately from expenses paid through license fees (receipt- supported services or RSS). Be sure to explain any items listed as “other” so they may be tracked appropriately.

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
November 17, 2023	Anchorage	8	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$ 885.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$ 350.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$ 70.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify): Gas, parking, mileage, per diem			\$ 200.00
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$ 1,505.00</b>

**Travel Required to Perform Examinations**

Not Applicable

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff

**Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:**

- Airfare:
- Hotel:
- Ground:
- Conference:
- Other (Please Specify):

**Total Estimated Cost:**

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**Budget Recommendations for FY 2024 (continued)**

**Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel**

(Rank in order of importance)

#1 Rank in Importance    or     Not Applicable

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff

**Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:**

Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:				
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
<b>Net Total:</b>				



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**Budget Recommendations for FY 2024 (continued)**

**Non-Travel Budget Requests**

- Not Applicable       Resources       Examinations  
 Membership       Training       Other

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event
Expert Witness Testimony	TBD	\$ 25,000.00

**Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:**

There is a need to hire experts to review investigative cases in order to alleviate some of the overwhelming time commitment and administrative burdens on board members.

**Non-Travel Budget Requests**

- Not Applicable       Resources       Examinations  
 Membership       Training       Other

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event
Membership Fees	FSMB	\$ 2,500.00

**Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:**

The FSMB is a resource that suggests national policies and standards for the medical profession on behalf of state medical and osteopathic boards in their protection of the public. Board staff utilize the national physician profile database maintained by the FSMB for background vetting in the licensing process. In addition, the FSMB provide specialized training and technical assistance for new board members and staff.

**Non-Travel Budget Requests**

- Not Applicable       Resources       Examinations  
 Membership       Training       Other

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event
Membership Fees	Administrators in Medicine	\$ 1,500.00

**Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:**

Administrators in Medicine researches and tracks issues and developments on a state-by-state basis and assists board executives in obtaining and sharing information to more effectively respond to the needs of their states. AIM also provides education and assistance to board staff and members, including certification programs for executives and investigators.

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**Budget Recommendations for FY 2024 (continued)**

**Other Items with a Fiscal Impact**

Not Applicable

**Cost Per Event:**

**Number of Events:**

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event

**Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:**

**Summary of FY 2024 Fiscal Requests:**

Board Meetings and Teleconferences:	\$ 1,505.00
Travel for Exams:	\$ 0.00
Out-of-State and Additional In-State Travel:	\$ 0.00
Dues, Memberships, Resources, Training:	\$ 29,000.00
Total Potential Third-Party Offsets:	\$ 0.00
Other:	\$ 0.00
<b>Total Requested:</b>	<b>\$30,505.00</b>

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**Legislative Recommendations - Proposed Legislation for FY 2024**

**No Recommendations**

The Board has no recommendations for proposed legislation at this time.

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**Recommendations**

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed legislation:

While the board may not have concrete recommendations for proposed legislation at this time, several key FY24 priorities may result in future proposed legislation pertaining to medical compact licensure, telemedicine licensure and a request for a restructure of the State Medical Board.

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**Regulation Recommendations - Proposed Regulations for FY 2024**

**No Recommendations**

The Board has no recommendations for proposed regulations at this time.

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**Recommendations**

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed regulations:

The board will continue the efforts initiated in FY23 to modernize the physician assistant regulations.

Proposed updates to the Telemedicine and Physician-Pharmacy Cooperative Agreement regulations were considered in FY23, but no changes were adopted. The board will likely continue to explore changes to these regulations, especially with respect to Telemedicine in FY24.

As time allows, the board will begin a structured review of all Medical Board Regulations and Statutes.

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**Goals and Objectives**

**Part I**

**FY 2023's goals and objectives and how they were met:**

**Goal #1: Telemedicine**

Continue to gather information about telemedicine best practices; communicate and work with the legislature to promote a three-tiered approach; and draft conforming regulations for HB 265.

*Progress toward goal in FY23:*

Proposed changes to conform 12 AAC 40.993 (Standards of practice for telemedicine) with the new telemedicine law were presented to the board for review and consideration in August 2023, the board took no action.

The board received a presentation on Telemedicine trends from the Federation of State Medical Boards in Nov. 2022.

**Goal #2: Expedite Licensure processes/Explore Medical License Compact**

Continue to work with stakeholders to explore and address strategies to streamline the licensure process. This will include continued work on regulation change and an examination of the Interstate License Compact. The board will gather information about the compact and determine next steps.

*Progress toward goal in FY23:*

The emergency regulation changes to 12 AAC 40.010 and 12 AAC 40.035 to expedite the processes for licensure were approved to be made permanent.

The board received a presentation in Feb 2023 and held a special meeting in April 2023, to begin the work of exploring the Interstate Medical license compact.

**Goal #3: Reconfiguration of Medical Board Membership**

Pursue increasing the membership of the Medical Board to help redistribute heavy demands and workloads on board members; explore other state models; provide the legislature with specific recommendations with respect to increasing the membership of the board.

*Progress toward goal in FY23:*

No progress made.

**Goal #4: National Engagement**

Board members will be actively involved with the Federation of State Medical Boards and its affiliated organizations.

*Progress toward goal in FY23:*

The Chair attended virtual meetings.

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**Goals and Objectives (continued)**

**Part II**

**FY 2024's goals and objectives, and proposed methods to achieve them.**

**Describe any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and required resources:**

Board members have identified the following priorities for FY24:

**Interstate Medical License Compact**

The board must decide whether the IMLC is a good fit for Alaska. A subgroup has been formed to examine the articles of the compact; statutory requirements, and pros and cons for adopting it in Alaska. The subgroup will draft a white paper to identify next steps.

**Finalize the Physician Assistant Regulation Modernization Project**

Next steps include, 1) a legal review of the changes already approved by the board; 2) public comment; 3) process and analysis of the public comments; consideration and adoption of further edits 4) adoption of a final version of the regulations.

**Telemedicine**

The board will explore the feasibility of pursuing a carve-out for a telemedicine-only license type in statute. This project may also involve changes to regulations to specify basic safety requirements for telemedicine practitioners serving rural Alaskans.

Other topics of interest include:

- Restructure the medical board to add paid staff and standing subcommittees responsible for timely investigative review, applicant review.
- Advocate for less restrictions by insurance companies of medication coverage and lab test.
- Explore the role and impact of Artificial Intelligence on the practice of medicine.

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**Sunset Audit Recommendations**

**Date of Last Legislative Audit:** 6/30/2022

**Board Sunset Date:** 6/30/2031

**Audit Recommendation:**

No recommendations.

**Action Taken:**

N/A

**Next Steps:**

N/A

**Complete :**  No  Yes **If yes, date completed:**