

Department of Commerce, Community
and Economic Development

Division of Corporations, Business
and Professional Licensing

Alaska State Medical Board
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2022



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

Board Member	Duty Station	Date Appointed	Term Expires
Richard Wein, MD, Chair General Surgery	Sitka	Mar 1, 2020	Mar 1, 2023
Sarah Bigelow Hood, PA-C Physician Assistant	Anchorage	Mar 1, 2020	Mar 1, 2023
Maria Freeman, MD Family Medicine	Wasilla	Jun 26, 2020	Mar 1, 2023
Matt Heilala, DPM Podiatrist	Anchorage	Nov 16, 2021	Mar 1, 2024
Lydia Mielke, Secretary Public Member	Big Lake	Mar 1, 2020	Mar 1, 2023
Steve Parker, MD Family Medicine	Wasilla	Mar 1, 2020	Mar 1, 2023
David Paulson, MD Neurosurgery	Anchorage	May 25, 2022	Mar 1, 2024
David Wilson Public Member	Wasilla	Jan 12, 2022	Mar 1, 2024

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Identification of the Staff

Natalie Norberg - Executive Administrator

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P.O. Box 110806
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(907) 465-2550

Jason Kaiser - Occupational Licensing Examiner

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Jacob Olsen - Occupational Licensing Examiner

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Alisa Perkins - Occupational Licensing Examiner

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Sonia Lipker - Investigative Supervisor

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Identification of the Staff (continued)

Billy Homestead - Investigator

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550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1500
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(907) 269-8124

Angel Romero - Investigator

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Karena Medina - Probation Monitor

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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 minimum competency standards for applicants who wish to practice medicine in Alaska. The ASMB continued to experience a high volume of work in FY2022, a phenomena started in FY2021 as a result if the pandemic. The Board met 14 times to process 923 licenses (over 100 more licenses than the year prior) and address a busy platform of special issues related to regulatory reform and pandemic response.

During FY 2022 (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022), the board issued 923 licenses, including:

- 608 allopathic physicians
- 86 osteopathic physicians
- 2 podiatrists
- 67 resident permits, 59 allopathic physicians and 8 osteopathic physicians
- 1 locum tenens
- 83 physician assistants
- 76 emergency courtesy licenses including 62 allopathic physicians, 18 osteopathic physicians

The MICP program was fully transferred to the Dept. of Health in January 2022, a process that involved considerable staff time to coordinate in order to ensure a smooth transition for licensees.

The Board approved regulations to:

- Make permanent, emergency regulations passed to expand the conditions for which a public health emergency may be declared in order to extend the ability for practitioners to prescribe buprenorphine for Opioid Use Disorder within a telehealth platform without the requirement of a licensed practitioner being physically present with the patient.
- Allow for an Military Courtesy License for active duty military personnel and their spouses.
- Eliminate the requirement for physician assistants to meet monthly with their collaborating physician during those periods when the physician assistant is not actively practicing under the collaborating physician.
- Eliminate the requirement for the Board of Pharmacy to review and approve a collaborative practice agreement between a physician and pharmacist as a condition before the Board will review and approve a collaborative practice agreement.
- Streamline and expedite the licensing process for temporary and full licensure by eliminating redundant and outdated license application requirements.
- Conform regulations with the new state law, transferring the Mobile Intensive Care Paramedic (MICP) program to the Department of Health.

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Narrative Statement (continued)

Board statements:

- The Board issued a statement to urge the legislature to adopt measures related to the oversight of telemedicine in Alaska including a three-tiered approach and the creation of a new "telemedicine" license type.
- In response to many letters and verbal testimony concerning "misinformation" in the treatment of COVID-19, the Board issued a statement related to the use of alternative medications for the treatment of COVID-19. The statement reiterated the process of investigation and adjudication; and that discipline is not arbitrary. Rather, the decision to discipline a licensee is based on facts and evidence presented through a thorough process. It was further reiterated that the Board's role pertains to the scope of practice of medicine as set forth in AS 08.064 and related regulations. Decisions to sanction the license of a medical professional is based on state law, not board member preference or public opinion.

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Budget Recommendations for FY 2023

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 18, 2022	Anchorage	8	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$ 1,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$ 500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$ 250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$ 250.00
Total Estimated Cost:			\$ 2,000.00

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
Total Estimated Cost:			\$ 0.00

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
Total Estimated Cost:			\$ 0.00

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Budget Recommendations for FY 2023 (continued)

Non-Travel Budget Requests

- Not Applicable Resources Examinations
 Membership Training Other

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event
Expert witness testimony	TBD	\$10,000.00

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 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 establishes 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 data base 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	AIM	\$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 2023 (continued)

Other Items with a Fiscal Impact

Not Applicable

Cost Per Event: \$1,000.00

Number of Events:

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event
Teleconference and Online Meeting Management platforms	Onboard & Zoom	\$1,000.00

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

Subscriptions for electronic platforms needed to host virtual board meetings.

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 2023 Fiscal Requests

Board Meetings and Teleconferences:	\$2,000.00
Travel for Exams:	\$0.00
Out-of-State and Additional In-State Travel:	\$0.00
Dues, Memberships, Resources, Training:	\$14,000.00
Total Potential Third-Party Offsets:	\$ 0.00
Other:	\$1,000.00
Total Requested:	\$17,000.00

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Legislative Recommendations - Proposed Legislation for FY 2023

No Recommendations

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

Recommendations

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed legislation:

The Alaska State Medical Board first and foremost respectfully requests that members of the State legislature Senate and House Health and Social Service Committees commit to consulting with collaborating with the Board prior to introducing new legislation that will impact licensees.

Additionally, the Board identifies the following recommendations for proposed legislation:

1. Amend AS to allow temporary licenses to be renewed for one six month period and remove fee structure language. This request is necessary as it relates to the overall strategies related to expediting initial licensure and providing for additional time for licensees to gather necessary background and application support/credentialing documents, while still being able to work in the state.
2. Allow for a separate license type for telemedicine. The Medical Board asserts that due to the unique geographic and cultural landscapes of Alaska, the expansion of telemedicine in this state must proceed cautiously and with diligent oversight. In order to provide proper oversight, the Board has endorsed a three-tiered approach to regulating telemedicine and urges the legislature to adopt this approach by authorizing the Medical Board to create a separate license type for telemedicine.
3. Reconfiguration of the Board - increase membership. The Medical Board has struggled to maintain its membership and a quorum to conduct the critical business of the Board. Heavy work loads spread among too few members has contributed to burnout and membership instability. Increasing the membership would assist with addressing this issue. The Board will provide the legislature with specific recommendations with respect to increasing the membership of the Board.

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Regulation Recommendations - Proposed Regulations for FY 2023

No Recommendations

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

Recommendations

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed regulations:

1. Physician assistant practice modernization. Throughout FY22, the Board conducted a series of collaborative work sessions with stakeholders and a special full board meeting aimed at exploring changes to the existing requirements related to the scope and oversight of physician assistants. Current regulations are regarded by stakeholders as being too restrictive and cumbersome, resulting in physician assistants being viewed by some in the health care industry as being a less desirable workforce option than other mid-level professionals such nurse practitioners. The Board anticipates drafting and endorsing a broad set of proposed regulation changes, which incorporate many of the suggestions made by stakeholders while still maintaining reasonable oversight.
2. Telehealth. The Board will draft regulations to comply with new telehealth legislation as a result of HB 265 which was passed by the legislature in May 2022 and signed into law on June 13, 2022.

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Goals and Objectives

Part I

FY 2022's goals and objectives and how they were met:

- 1. The Board will continue to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of current and new statutes and regulations, and the need to revise outdated regulations and/or new regulations especially as they relate to the initial application and licensing processes.***

The Board achieved this goal by:

- Passing emergency regulations to streamline and expedite the licensing process for temporary and full licensure by eliminating redundant and outdated license application requirements.
- Engaging in the efforts related to the Physician Assistant Modernization project.
- Completing the Military Courtesy License and initiating the MICP conforming regulation projects.

- 2. The Board will continue to work with the Board of Pharmacy and other health care related programs within the Division that interact with the PDMP to reframe the PDMP as a tool to improve patient care.***

The Board Chair actively participated in the bi-monthly PDMP Chair meeting. This group initiated communication to the legislature to highlight the need for an independent evaluation of the PDMP and to reshape the PDMP into a proactive tool to improved patient care. This group also helped to secure funding for an evaluation of the PDMP.

- 3. The Board will gather information about the interstate medical licensure compact and determine next steps. The Board will draft a white paper on the pros and cons of a medical licensure compact for Alaska to present to the legislature.***

No progress was made on this goal.

- 4. The Board will continue to be involved with the Federation of State Medical Boards and its affiliated organizations and require Board members and staff to attend their meetings and activities.***

The board chair attended the annual virtual House of Delegates meeting and quarterly meetings.

- 5. The Board will improve communication and outreach efforts with licensees, the public and the legislature.***

Board staff initiated regular updates to the Medical Board webpage to ensure important announcements, meeting notices, minutes, updated forms and updates to FAQ were posted in a timely manner. The Medical Board Listserv was also used to notify members of special announcements and regulatory changes.

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Goals and Objectives (continued)

Part II

FY 2023's goals and objectives, and proposed methods to achieve them.

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

In FY2023, the Board plans to prioritize the following goals:

- 1. Telemedicine. The Board will 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.***
- 2. The Board will 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.***
- 3. Reconfiguration of Medical Board Membership. The Medical Board has struggled to maintain its membership and a quorum to conduct the critical business of the Board. Heavy work loads spread among too few members has contributed to burnout and membership instability. Increasing the membership would assist with addressing this issue. The Board will provide the legislature with specific recommendations with respect to increasing the membership of the Board.***
- 4. The Board will continue to be involved with the Federation of State Medical Boards and its affiliated organizations and require Board members and staff to attend their meetings and activities.***

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Sunset Audit Recommendations

Date of Last Legislative Audit: 06/30/2022

Board Sunset Date: 06/30/2030

Audit Recommendation:

A legislative audit was conducted in May - June, 2022. The final report containing the findings and recommendations of the audit were not yet available as of the writing of this annual report.

Action Taken:

N/A

Next Steps:

N/A

Completed: No Yes

If yes, date completed: