

Department of Commerce, Community
and Economic Development

Division of Corporations, Business
and Professional Licensing

Board of Pharmacy

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025



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

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This report is required under Alaska Statute 08.01.070(10).

**Board of Pharmacy
FY 2025 Annual Report**

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**Board of Pharmacy
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Board Membership *(as of the Date This Report was Approved)*

Date of Final Board Approval: 5/22/2025

Ashley Schaber, Pharmacist (Chairperson)
Carla Hebert, Pharmacist (Vice-Chairperson)
Sylvain Nouvion, Pharmacist (Secretary)
Ramsey Bell, Pharmacist
Julie McDonald, Pharmacist
Dylan Sanders, Pharmacy Technician
Sara Rasmussen, Public Member

Board of Pharmacy FY 2025 Annual Report

Accomplishments

The Board of Pharmacy "the board" submits this report highlighting its endeavors to promote the welfare and safety of the public through the effective regulation of the pharmacy profession and pharmaceutical supply chain in Alaska for FY25. This year, the Board of Pharmacy: sent email notification to licensees of meetings, notified licensees via Listserv of licensing process changes and updated statutes/regulations, continued work on statute and regulation changes with a barrier-reduction and standard of care regulatory framework to support pharmacy services and the growth of the Alaskan economy, with many regulatory changes effective in September 2024. This year, the board also welcomed its first pharmacy technician board member. Below is a summary of the board's legislative, regulatory, licensing, and communication/collaboration accomplishments.

Legislative Accomplishments:

- One of the board's major legislative priorities has been addressing Pharmacy Benefits Manager practices impacting access to care for Alaskans. House Bill 226 of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session (Pharmacies/Pharmacists/Pharmacy Benefits Managers), sponsored by Representative Jesse Sumner, a collaborative effort supported by the Alaska Pharmacy Association, the Board of Pharmacy, and multiple other patient care and healthcare organizations, passed the Legislature in May 2024 and was signed by the Governor in fall 2024. The changes in this bill begin to address Pharmacy Benefits Managers' practices including white-bagging and brown-bagging and spread-pricing, which have been identified as having a negative impact on patient care, public health infrastructure, and pharmacy access in Alaska. The board has received feedback about these practices in the form of public comment and industry updates over the past few years and appreciated the opportunity to support and advocate for HB 226. The board continued to support efforts addressing Pharmacy Benefits Manager practices by supporting Senate Bill 142 (Health Insurance and Pharmacy Benefits Managers) and working with the legislature to introduce legislation continuing to address the practice of white-bagging.
- The board has identified that additional clarifications in AS 08.80.337 are needed to allow pharmacists to practice at the top of their clinical ability, education, training, and experience, including prescriptive authority in certain circumstances. The board worked with the legislature to introduce Senate Bill 147 and House Bill 195. The Alaska Pharmacy Association supported these efforts as well. While these bills had several committee hearings, they have not yet passed either chamber. The board plans to continue pursuing these bills in FY26. The healthcare system in general in Alaska has limited hospital beds, Emergency Department space, and other services in general. There needs to be a collaborative effort for all disciplines to practice at the top of their clinical ability, education, training, and experience, to help address access for Alaskans.

Regulation Accomplishments:

- Effective in September 2024, the Board of Pharmacy implemented new regulations to allow for non-punitive addiction treatment for licensees who self-disclose opioid use or alcohol use disorder and seek assistance in this area; define pharmacy and facility ownership and changes in ownership; allow pharmacy technicians to practice at the top of their training and ability; clarify pharmacist registration requirements for the PDMP; update sterile compounding regulatory guidelines to a standard of practice model; and remove board approval for collaborative practice agreements between pharmacists and practitioners.
- Pending notice and public comment, the board has proposed regulation changes to allow the board to accept Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (CME) and credit for attending Alaska Board of Pharmacy meetings for continuing education credit for licensees; remove the notary requirement for applications; change "pharmacist intern" to "pharmacy intern" throughout regulation to align with statutes; streamline requirements for pharmacist and pharmacy technician license reinstatements; require an updated home license along with written notifications of changes to physical address, name, and ownership; and remove the regulation related to storing controlled substances in automated distribution kiosks.

Licensing Accomplishments:

- The Board of Pharmacy advocated for and supported online initial license applications. To date, the initial license applications for technicians, pharmacists, interns, and pharmacies are available online. These changes have significantly improved license processing turnaround times.

Communication/Collaboration Accomplishments:

- Published a regular newsletter to all licensees after each quarterly meeting (implemented December 2024)
- Provided updates to the Alaska State Medical Board (February and April 2025)
- Attended and observed the UAA/ISU College of Pharmacy's Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) campus accreditation (March 2025)

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Activities

FY25 Board of Pharmacy Meetings:

- August 20, 2024 (Quarterly Meeting, including Investigative, Division Licensing, Budget, and PDMP updates)
- October 10, 2024 (Statutes and Regulations Committee)
- November 14, 2024 (Quarterly Meeting, including Investigative, Division Licensing, Budget, and PDMP updates)
- February 20, 2025 (Quarterly Meeting, including Investigative, Division Licensing, Budget, and PDMP updates)
- April 3, 2025 (Special Meeting to discuss legislation)
- May 22, 2025 (Quarterly Meeting, including Investigative, Division Licensing, Budget, and PDMP updates)

FY25 Professional Meetings Attended:

- September Alaska Hospital and Healthcare Association Conference : 1 board member
- September Alaska Pharmacy Association Healthsystem Conference: 1 board member
- October NABP District 6,7,8 Meeting: Collaboration with the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (ACCP) and State Pharmacy Assn Leaders: 2 Board Members
- February AKPhA Annual Conference: 1 Board Member, Executive Administrator
- April Rx and Illicit Drug Summit: PDMP Manager, Executive Administrator, Chief Investigator
- May NABP Annual Meeting: 1 Board Member

New/Continued Initiatives:

- Partnership with AKPhA and UAA/Idaho State University College of Pharmacy for regular updates on initiatives during board quarterly meetings
- Exploring offering continuing education (CE) for portions of board meetings
- Just Culture- the Board of Pharmacy is exploring how this concept can be applied as a regulatory board.
- "Implementing Solutions: Building a Sustainable, Healthy Pharmacy Workforce and Workplace": the board performed an assessment and gap analysis of the actionable NABP/Boards of Pharmacy solutions recommended from the American Pharmacists Association/American Society of Healthsystem Pharmacy/NABP June 2023 Summit. The board is utilizing this assessment to pursue statutory, regulatory, and operational changes to support a sustainable, healthy pharmacy workforce and workplace.

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Needs

- Legislative Priorities
 - Addressing Pharmacy Benefits Managers practices impacting safety, access, and transparency for Alaskan patients and pharmacies. The board plans continued collaboration on state and federal efforts to address these practices during FY26.
 - Streamlining Licensure Process for Pharmacists
 - The board implemented regulation changes repealing the law exam requirement for pharmacists applying for licensure by examination and replace it with a legally binding attestation. These regulation changes went into effect May 19, 2024.
 - Statute change is required to remove the law exam requirement for pharmacists desiring to become licensed via reciprocity from other states.
 - The board is pursuing removal of AS 08.80.145(4) and (6) which have been identified as a barrier to licensure by reciprocity and is working with the legislature to draft legislation.
 - Allowing pharmacists to practice at the top of their clinical ability, education, training, and experience, including independent prescriptive authority.
 - The board has identified that additional clarifications in AS 08.80.337 are needed to allow pharmacists to practice at the top of their clinical ability, education, training, and experience. The board plans to continue pursuing SB147 and HB195 in FY26.
 - The healthcare system in general in Alaska has limited hospital beds, Emergency Department space, and other services in general. There needs to be a collaborative effort for all disciplines to practice at the top of scope to help address access for Alaskans.
 - While the avenue to collaborate with other Alaskan practitioners through collaborative practice agreements remains, the approval process for these agreements through the Alaska State Medical Board has become burdensome. Additionally, the patient care services being provided through the agreements are provided by pharmacists independently in multiple other states as well as in federal healthcare systems. With pharmacists having the option to provide these services independently when statutory criteria are met and education, training, and experience allow, the need for collaborative agreements would decrease.
- Regulatory Changes Needed:
 - *Additional regulatory changes are needed to align with the standard of care regulatory model concept implemented in January 2024. The board is working to identify the regulations that can be eliminated as a result of this implementation.
- Additional Needs in FY25:
 - *Administrative support to reconvene the Controlled Substance Advisory Committee (CSAC). No meetings were held in FY23-FY25. The Board of Pharmacy public member serving on the committee resigned and was replaced in FY23, and this role continues to serve as the chair of the CSAC. However, due to administrative challenges and competing demands within the Department of Law, this group has not yet been reconvened. This is a statutory requirement and the board recommends the administrative challenges be addressed or the statutory requirement to meet be removed.

*Prescription Drug Monitoring Program- collaboration facilitated by CBPL is needed among the professional boards regulated by the PDMP and others with a shared interest. Background: HB 306 (32nd Legislature) extended the Board of Pharmacy through June 30, 2028. While not the full eight (8)-year period that would have extend the board through 2030, the six (6)-year extension is necessitated by the need to reassess the administration and oversight of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), the state's controlled substance prescription database and interactive technological tool to assist providers in combating the opioid epidemic. As the PDMP affects a total of five (5) professions regulated by the State Medical Board, Board of Nursing, Board of Examiners in Optometry, Board of Dental Examiners, and the Board of Pharmacy, the legislature expects to see continued collaboration among these boards and their constituents. The sunset audit also illuminated inherent statutory limitations that impose challenges on the Board of Pharmacy's ability to satisfy reporting requirements to the legislature and its ability to comply with federal grant deliverables. At the request of the legislature, DCCED - CBPL is procured a consultant in FY23 to analyze the structure of the PDMP, assess effectiveness of program administration and regulation, and to provide recommendations on how the system can better align with its legislative intent to support judicious prescribing and reduce diversion and abuse of federally-scheduled controlled substances. The consultant report completed by the McKinley Research Group (MGR) and released in February 2023 recommended CBPL convene a PDMP working group to review the findings of the analysis and prioritize changes for improved effectiveness through a multi-perspective lens. MGR noted that nature of this effort is beyond the scope or capacity of just the Board of Pharmacy itself and/or other healthcare licensure boards. Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) framework for PDMP Use/Effectiveness, it is recommended the working group be comprised of representatives from the PDMP program, state health department (i.e., Chief Medical Officer), state insurance programs (i.e., Medicaid Medical Director), healthcare licensure boards, and law enforcement. This workgroup has not yet been convened, and the the December 2024 update to the Board Chairperson is that most of the items outlined as needing to be addressed by a PDMP workgroup as recommended to the Division in the McKinley Research Group assessment can be addressed internally through the Division. At this point, most have been addressed and improvements are in place now or are in the works.

*Continued delegation of administrative tasks to Board of Pharmacy Executive Administrator position.

*Staff and board member training, engagement, and development including the concepts of Just Culture and Standard of Care through avenues such as National Association of Boards of Pharmacy and other organizational conferences.