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**MAINE**  
State Government

Winter 2007

# Notes from your Licensing Board

## Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine

### FROM THE BOLIM FILES:

#### COMPUTER THEFT:

This fall, a doctor licensed by the Board wrote to tell us that a desktop computer was stolen from his office. It contained no clinical records. It did contain the office's billing programs, which contained information for processing claims and bills, and included patient names, addresses, diagnostic codes, dates of service and insurance identification numbers.

The burglary was reported to the police the day it was discovered. The physician subsequently sent out a letter to all patients in that database informing them of the theft and the steps recommended to protect themselves from identity theft. Those steps included: (1) contact the three major credit bureaus (i.e., Equifax: 1-800-525-6285; Experian: 1-800-397-3742; and TransUnion Corp. 1-800-680-7289) to place a fraud alert on your credit file; (2) contact the police if you find suspicious activity on your credit report and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft) or at 1-877-438-4338; (3) check your credit report periodically; (4) review all correspondence from medical insurers, including "This Is Not a Bill" statements for any treatment you did not receive; (5) at least once a year ask insurers for a list of all payments made in your name to uncover cases where a thief changes "your" billing address; and, (6) be vigilant regarding all financial transactions.

Since this is new territory for the Board of Licensure in Medicine and a potentially scary one for doctors and patients, we thought we'd ask if our readers have advice in this area they'd like to share with the Maine physician community. If so, send us a letter to the editor and we'll publish any additional helpful information, in our judgment, in future newsletters as an educational tool to our licensees.

#### PHYSICIAN HEALTH PROGRAM: A SUCCESS STORY NOT REPORTABLE TO THE BOARD.

Dr. D is a 53 year-old healthcare professional who began to drink alcohol to alter his moods to deal with the stress and anxiety of his busy practice. He would drink up to a six-pack of beer on weeknights and more on the weekends. He experienced marital stress related to his drinking and on one occasion he was stopped by a policeman while driving under the influence and allowed to check into a local motel without being charged. He tried to stop drinking on his own but was unable to maintain sobriety for more than two to three weeks at a time.

He read the Board of Medicine Newsletter citing the availability of confidential assistance and called the Maine Physician's Health Program (PHP). He was evaluated by the clinical director, Dr. David Simmons, and subsequently by an addictionologist. He voluntarily entered the PHP for monitoring his efforts at recovery. His treatment program consisted of regular follow up with the addictionologist, participation in Caduceus (medical professionals self help group) and traditional Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Random urines have been monitored for drug and alcohol use.

Three years later Dr. D enjoys his practice, family, and friends more than ever before. His recovery program remains strong and he often assists newcomers to the self-help group. Because he voluntarily enrolled, he has not experienced adverse consequences legally or professionally and his participation in the PHP is unknown to the board of licensure.

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#### 2007 BOLIM Meeting Schedule

- January 9
- February 13
- February 20
- March 13
- April 10
- May 8
- May 15
- June 12
- July 10
- August 14
- September 11
- October 9
- October 16
- November 13
- December 11

## METHADONE PRESCRIPTION PRIVILEGES LIMITED TO PHYSICIANS

The Board recognizes that Methadone can be a very effective and an inexpensive way to control cancer and other types of chronic pain. It is the Board's feeling that the use of Methadone for acute pain is generally not appropriate. In the acute pain setting, Methadone, with its long half life, can be difficult to titrate and not infrequently can have delayed toxicity.

Methadone has a slow onset of release and a long duration of action. Because of its long half life, plasma levels may take 5 to 7 days to stabilize. It can take several days from the first dosage for toxicity to begin to appear; thus, the drug must be started at a low dose and gradually increased. With the usage of prescribed Methadone increasing, this delay in toxicity is a major reason for the marked increase in Methadone-associated mortality seen recently in Maine. The majority of these associated deaths are from the drug's usage for pain, as prescribed by a physician, and not from its usage to treat addiction.

In the unusual circumstance that Methadone is to be used for acute pain, it will need to be prescribed by a physician. Therefore, it is the Board's position that Physician Assistants not be allowed to prescribe Methadone as part of their Schedule II requests.

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER VACANCIES

The Physician Assistant Advisory Committee is a technical advisory committee formed to consider issues relating to Physician Assistants (PAs). It makes recommendations to the Board of Licensure in Medicine and/or to the Board of Osteopathic Licensure. There are four physician assistants, four physicians and one public member on the committee. The Board is seeking to fill two physician vacancies and one physician assistant vacancy on the committee beginning early in 2007 when current terms expire.

Serving on the PA Advisory Committee is true public service in that members are not paid except for reimbursement for mileage to and from the meetings. The committee meets four times per year on the first Tuesday of March, June, September and December. Members are sent materials to review prior to the meeting and the meetings last on average 2-3 hours and convene at 9:00 A.M. in Augusta.

Dr. Kimberly Gooch is the liaison to the PA Advisory Committee from the Board of Licensure in Medicine. If you have an interest in serving, Dr. Gooch would be happy to talk with you. You can reach Dr. Gooch at the Board by calling 207-287-3604. Please call before February 20th to allow enough time for your application to be reviewed.

Qualifications for serving are being currently licensed and living in Maine, with experience working with and/or supervising PAs or currently working as a PA under supervision.

Recommendations for appointment to the committee will be presented to the Board of Licensure in Medicine for consideration March 13, 2007.

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT MEETING SCHEDULE

**March 6**

**June 5**

**September 4**

**December 4**

Physician Assistant Advisory meetings convene at 9:00 AM.

## ONLINE M.D. LICENSE RENEWALS

### Online M.D. License Renewals

The Board is planning a new, more convenient way for physicians to renew their licenses. If all goes as planned, the Board expects to offer online renewal of M.D. licenses in the early part of 2007. The Board has contracted with Maine.Gov's InforME to implement this initiative.

### Who is eligible to renew online?

The service will be available to MD's who wish to renew their license in "Active" or "Inactive" status as long as 1) they have not withdrawn from licensure; 2) they have not allowed their license to lapse; and, 3) their license is not currently under suspension.

### Payment method.

Payment will be allowed by MasterCard or Visa.

### Fee

The renewal fee will remain the same (currently \$400 for a two-year cycle).

### Renewal Certificate

Following a successful online renewal, which will include reporting of required CME, the Board will mail the renewed wall license and wallet card to the physician. Physicians who successfully renew online and have no adverse actions to report will enjoy accelerated renewal of their medical license.

The Board's database will be updated with the renewed license expiration date within 1 business day of the successful transaction.

### Adverse Actions reviewed by Board staff

If adverse actions are reported, including medical malpractice allegations or settlements, the renewal will be reviewed by Board staff and the license renewal may be delayed.

### Notification of "Time to Renew"

- Around 60 days before the M.D.'s license is to expire the Board will mail a card to the licensee advising that the license is due to expire. The card will provide an internet address where the license may be renewed online. The card will also offer a web address at which the renewal application may be downloaded and printed, or will invite the licensee to return the card to the Board and request that the Board mail a renewal application to the licensee.
- Following your successful login, much of your personal and professional information will be extracted from the Board's database and displayed on the screen where you can review it for correctness and change it if you need to. The Board will not permit "online" changes of name, social security number or date of birth. To make such changes contact the Board at (207)287-3782 for further instructions.

### Beware

**The Board is not affiliated with, nor does it endorse, any third party licensing sites.** You may be contacted by a third party license renewal service such as <http://www.medlicense.com/> offering to assist your online license renewal for a fee. If you use such a service for renewal instead of the Board's InforME web site, you are responsible for any inaccuracy or missed deadline due to using that service.

## BOARD OFFERS LICENSEES ADDRESS PRIVACY

The Board is pleased to announce that it is now possible for licensees to receive renewal forms and other mailings from the Board at their home address without that address being published on the website. Maine law requires that licensees provide the Board with two addresses and telephone numbers - one address for their current professional location and one address for their personal residence location. A programming development now allows for the business address to be publicly displayed on DocFinder, regardless of which address is chosen as the "contact at" address. If you wish to change your address, you can download a change of address form on our website at [http://www.docboard.org/me/licensure/dw\\_change\\_address.pdf](http://www.docboard.org/me/licensure/dw_change_address.pdf).

Complete the form with your new information and return it to the Board to make the change.



**Maine Board of Licensure in  
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**Notify the Board of Address Changes Immediately**

Many people experience problems at renewal time because they have neglected to notify the Board of an address change. To prevent delays or even loss of license due to lapse, notify the Board immediately of any change in your mailing address. Simply send a signed note with changes to the Board.

Check out our website at [http://www.docboard.org/me/me\\_home.htm](http://www.docboard.org/me/me_home.htm) to verify that the Board has your correct mailing address on file. If the address is incorrect, simply send a signed note with changes to the Board.

**Committee on Physician Health Confidential professional help for substance abuse is available by contacting Dr. David J. Simmons at 622-3374 or 623-9266**