



Senate Health Committee

Testimony of Stephanie M. Loucka, Executive Director, State Medical Board of Ohio
April 27, 2021

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today about Governor DeWine's Executive Budget and about the State Medical Board's budget initiatives for fiscal years 2022 and 2023. The Medical Board has put forth a proposal that has zero draw from Ohio's general revenue funds, emphasizes public safety, and supports responsible human capital management.

It is the Medical Board's mission to protect and enhance the health and safety of the public through effective medical regulation. The board accomplishes this through its authority to license, regulate and discipline Ohio's physicians, physician assistants and other allied healthcare professionals. The board's goals aim to:

- Ensure persons practicing medicine meet sufficient standards of education, training, competence, and ethics
- Define and advocate for standards of safe medical practice
- Prohibit persons from practicing medicine whose violations are so egregious as to forfeit the privilege
- Provide information about the licensees of the board, the board's functions and operations, and the laws governing the practice of medicine
- Achieve and maintain the highest possible levels of organizational efficacy.

State Medical Board of Ohio: Current Biennium Focus

Over the last year and a half, the Medical Board staff has engaged in a thorough examination of its processes relative to sexual misconduct complaints. As a result, the board has:

- Created new processes and protocols as to the investigation and enforcement of sexual misconduct complaints and interactions with local law enforcement officials.
- Received intensive training on the trauma connected to sexual misconduct and the impact of the trauma on investigatory and enforcement actions at both the staff and board level.
- Started a campaign to educate licensees on their statutory duty to report violations of the board's laws, including, but not limited to sexual misconduct violations.

- Engaged with multiple stakeholder groups to begin the proposed revision of the board's statutory scheme to ensure both public safety and transparency in the board's process.
- Dedicated a position to working with complainants of sexual misconduct.

In addition to the opportunity to focus on the handling of sexual misconduct complaints, the board's day to day work remains at an all-time high. We currently have approximately 93,000 active licensees, a 37% increase from 5 years ago. The board received over 7,000 complaints in FY20, an increase of over 50% from 5 years ago. These increases have occurred while our staffing levels remained flat. This budget is structured to continue the investment in staffing and operational efficiency around the work units handling complaint management and licensee services, as well as to develop expertise and focus in the handling of sexual misconduct cases.

State Medical Board of Ohio: Looking Forward

In the recent past, the board had a significant, and necessary focus, on the operational efficiency of the licensing process for our professionals. Considering all the board has learned over the current biennium, it is obvious the board needs to increase focus on the human capital requirements in sections responsible for complaint management. This increased focus will enable us to achieve a higher level of service to both the public and our licensees. We must ensure individuals who harm patients receive appropriate, effective discipline, up to and including licensure revocation. We must also ensure an efficient, fair resolution for all our licensees.

To effectively strengthen our ability to manage complaints and continue our prioritization on cases surrounding sexual misconduct, the board proposes to add additional positions to assist with our current case load, including the growing number of new complaints and complaints that continue to age as they await enforcement. More importantly, additional staff members will position us to become a national leader in handling sexual misconduct complaints. Our budget proposal of \$12,294,000 in FY22 and \$12,552,000 in FY23 will allow us to do this.

Conclusion

The proposed operating budget will allow us to continue to meet and exceed the expectations of our licensees and the citizens of Ohio. It will enable us to maintain our current staffing, as well as allow for necessary additional assistance in the critical areas identified. The board's projected revenue can support these additional, critical positions, without any impact on the general revenue fund and without raising licensure fees.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak to you today. I will gladly answer any questions you have at this time.