

ARIZONA

Arizona Board of Osteopathic
Examiners
in
Medicine and Surgery

Annual Report
2020



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About Us

The Arizona Board of Osteopathic Examiners (Board) plays a crucial role in Arizona's medical profession. It is responsible for the licensure of osteopathic practitioners, the enforcement of standards of practice, and the review and adjudication of complaints.

Osteopathic medicine is a growing field that emphasizes hands-on diagnosis and treatment in medical care. Across the country numbers of Osteopathic Physicians grow, with the numbers in Arizona growing more than the national average.

The Board actively builds strong connections with Arizona's existing and future osteopathic physicians. We include medical students in each of our Board meetings, extending our outreach to future physicians we hope will choose to stay in Arizona. We help demystify the state's licensing and physician oversight processes, so medical professionals are ready to join the workforce when they complete their degrees.

Osteopathic medicine is a growing field that emphasizes hands-on diagnosis and treatment in medical care. Arizona is seeing a growing number of new Osteopathic Physicians apply for licensure in the state and that has continued amidst the pandemic.

The Board is composed of five osteopathic doctors and two members of the public who do not have financial ties to the osteopathic profession. In accordance with Arizona Statute, the Governor appoints each member to a five-year term; each member may serve a second consecutive five-year term if re-appointed. The Board elects its officers each January. In 2020, the Board welcomed two new appointees : Dr. Dawn K. Walker and Dr. Ken S. Ota. Dr. Martin Reiss and Dr. Christopher Spiekerman retired from the Board this year, and we are grateful for their many years of service.



Arizona Board of Osteopathic Examiners in Medicine and Surgery

Board Members

President

Jerry G. Landau, J.D.

Vice-President

Gary A. Erbstoesser, D.O.

Past-President

Douglas L. Cunningham, D.O.

Professional Member

Jonathan A. Maitem, D.O.

Public Member

Jeffrey H. Burg, AIF

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Dawn Walker, D.O.

Professional Member

Ken S. Ota, D.O.

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Deputy Director

Lindsey Castro

Medical Consultant

Barbara Prah-Wix, D.O.

Investigator

John O'Hair-Schattenberg

Investigator

Jarris Vonzombie

Investigations Administrator

Carla Corral

Licensing Administrator

Meaghan Maxwell

Licensing Administrator

Chris Andreyka

Business Office Manager

Kimberly Madrid

Staff Assistant

Irma Dominick



2020 Changes and Challenges

This year brought many unexpected obstacles. Like other organizations across the globe, we had to quickly alter operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Board meetings moved online to protect our team and safely facilitate public involvement in discussions. The Board's staff shifted seamlessly to remote work environments, and adopted a rotating schedule to offer in-person office hours with new protocols that followed state and federal health guidelines.

Through all the uncertainty, the Board and its staff continued to facilitate the licensure and oversight of osteopathic physicians at a time when medical professionals were in high demand across the state.

Board staff reorganized office procedures and established an entirely paperless license renewal system to provide better, safer service. We implemented new technology to streamline our operations and provide a smoother process for applicants.

During the pandemic, Board staff conducted 40% of its business virtually; 60% of its work took place in the office, with safety protocols in place. Prior to 2020, only 3% of staff hours were completed in an entirely virtual space.

Customer Service

Our Goal is whether online or in-person, every constituent would receive a timely response and helpful information when they contacted the Board office. We believe have reliably met this goal using adaptive technologies during this time doing all we can to respond to questions, follow-up with constituents, and process additional workloads in this ever shifting environment.



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In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board waived licensing fees and implemented streamlined emergency licenses and license renewals, and helped remove barriers to the high-quality practice of medicine in Arizona. This resulted in nearly 100 emergency licenses being issued by the end of calendar year 2020.

The Board restructured our staff organizational structure to strengthen our customer service and find efficiencies in the operational processes. Those efficiencies reduced response times and will enable the Board to propose lower fees in a rulemaking package in calendar year 2021.

Rulemaking

In 2020, The Board successfully completed a five-year review of its administrative rules which resulted in positive feedback and praise from the Governor's Regulatory Review Council (GRRC) for its thorough and customer-focused approach to the process. The rule review identified improvements to Board rules that will be addressed in a rulemaking package in calendar year 2021.



Outreach and Education



Board members discuss the practice and oversight of osteopathic medicine with medical students at a Board meeting in November 2020.

Despite the challenges this year brought, we continued our outreach to Arizona's future workforce. The Board invited medical students to connect to meetings virtually, so they could get answers to their questions and better understand the role of the Board in the field of osteopathic medicine. More than 60 students attended and participated in each Board meeting since August.

Members of the Board's staff continued our outreach and education, as well. We participated in several important conferences and conversations this year:

- We met with representatives of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association to discuss how the AOA Physician Profile Report could be improved for better utilization and verification during the application process.
- We participated in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact's first Annual Licensing Summit. The Summit connected our team to professionals in other states, and we learned from best practices and new ideas regarding licensing processes for expedited compact licenses.



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- We attended various virtual educational conferences, lectures, webinars, and training sessions to expand our knowledge and enable us to better serve the Board and the physicians we license. Staff completed more than 70 hours of continuing education in a range of important topics, from physician sexual misconduct to open meeting standards and other legal issues for virtual meetings.



Licensing

Arizona's population of osteopathic physicians grows each year. This year, it increased by 20%; it has grown by a total of 55% in the last decade. Nationally, the number of osteopathic physicians has increased by almost 300% over the last 30 years.

The Board expects this growth to continue in Arizona, with another 25% increase in the number of licensing applications next year.

In response to growing demand, we have improved our processes to offer a highly responsive licensing service. The average licensing timeframe has decreased by almost 350%, from 120 days to 35 days. To prevent unnecessary delays, we notify applicants of any deficiencies in their information no more than three days after the application was received.

In response to growing demand, we have adapted our processes to offer a highly responsive licensing service.

We are continually looking for new ways to streamline and adapt processes, and are updating our available technology so our team can respond to questions and assist customers in a faster and more convenient way.

We continue to enhance the licensing services we offer online - an option that will further reduce our timeframes and increase our accessibility.

On April 6, 2020, the Board authorized its staff to issue Emergency Temporary 30-day licenses to qualified applicants. To date, we have issued more than 100 emergency licenses to applicants who are providing care to Arizona citizens during the pandemic. We processed the applications within 1-2 business days, to provide expedited service and allow qualified physicians to begin work as quickly as possible.



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Performance Measures	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Estimate	FY2022 Estimate
Number of new and existing licenses	3,883	4,200	4,500
Number of applications for new licensed received (does not include Post Graduate permits or dispensing registrations)	427	464	500
Number of new licenses issued	493	440	460
Average days to issue new license	0	3	3
Percentage of renewals done online vs. paper/manually	98%	99%	99%



Complaints and Compliance

As Arizona's population of osteopathic professionals grows, so does the Board's commitment to patient protection. Every complaint is managed respectfully and every situation is addressed with professionalism. Our investigations team conducts thorough and complete investigations ensuring all sides of a complaint are analyzed, allowing the Board to review all detail to reach adjudication for each case.

This year, the Board updated its compliance management to improve our service to osteopathic professionals. The new, custom, system improves compliance reporting to the Board, by tracking individuals who are in the compliance process, and providing automatic notification of upcoming deadlines.

Our investigations team conducts thorough and complete investigations to ensure all sides of a complaint are analyzed, so the Board understands every detail as they adjudicate each case.

To better understand the scope of past decisions and improve compliance actions in the future, the Board has partnered with the Watt's College of Health Care Compliance and Regulations at Arizona State University to facilitate an internship program. This program will cumulate and evaluate data on the Board's enforcement actions over the past 30 years – by age group, gender, allegations, and discipline.

We identified important professional development opportunities that are not currently included in the Board's administrative rules on continuing medical education. Next year, the Board will address this deficiency through a rule change to expand the ways in which licensed osteopath physicians can earn their required continuing medical education credits.



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The Board also established committees to evaluate:

- The compliance effects of Proposition 207, the Smart and Safe Arizona Act that voters approved in November.
- Options for balancing patient safety with physician rehabilitation through the Confidential Program for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Impaired Physicians, which offers an anonymous path through treatment for osteopathic physicians that face substance abuse challenges but have not committed any offenses.

These committees will provide their analysis and recommendations early in 2021.

Performance Measures	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Estimate	FY2022 Estimate
Complaints received	222	310	310
Complaints investigated	320	300	300
Licensees who had disciplinary action taken	20	20	20
Average calendar days to resolve a complaint	185	180	170
Average calendar days to investigate a complaint	165	120	120
Number of complaints closed/resolved	377	320	320



Fee Reductions

In response to Governor Ducey's Executive Order 2020-07, the Board voted to waive any of the fees related to the applications for licensure including temporary and emergency applications. This decision ensure license procedures were still as least impactful as possible during the declared pandemic:

- Licensing fees
We waived more than \$138,000 in licensing fees from new applicants in 2020.
- Postgraduate training permit fees
We saved hospitals, clinics and educational programs almost \$30,000 in 2020, so they could utilize their limited resources for other priorities.
- Application issuance fees
We suspended the administrative fee for applicants, which immediately waived costs for almost 20 in-process applications. This streamlined the application approval process for other applicants in 2020, as well.

Throughout the year, unrelated to the impacts of the pandemic, we have implemented staff restructuring and identified operational efficiencies to reduce costs. Because of these changes, next year the Board will pursue a rule change to reduce fees for osteopathic license applications and renewals.



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