



# MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

Executive Office



Education Committee Meeting  
Sheraton Gateway  
Redondo Room  
6101 West Century Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90045

**March 5, 2008**

## MINUTES

### **Agenda Item 1      Call to order**

The Education Committee (EC) of the Medical Board of California was called to order by Chair Barbara Yaroslavsky at 11:01 a.m. A quorum was present, and due notice had been mailed to all interested parties.

#### Members Present:

Barbara Yaroslavsky, Chair  
Hedy Chang  
Gerrie Schipske, R.N.P., J.D.  
Janet Salomonson, M.D.

#### Staff and Guests Present:

Barb Johnston, Executive Director  
Kim Kirchmeyer, Deputy Director  
Frank Zerunyan, J.D., member, MBC  
Laurie Gregg, M.D., MBC Wellness Committee  
Renee Threadgill, Chief of Enforcement  
Anita Scuri, Supervising Senior Counsel, DCA  
Linda Whitney, Chief of Legislation  
Candis Cohen, Information Officer  
Randy Freitas, Business Services Office  
Alana Torgelson, CA Physicians Health Program  
Daniel Lang, M.D., CA Hospital Association  
Shannon Chavez, M.D., U.C., San Diego  
Paula Stoessel, Ph.D., U.C., Los Angeles  
Jeff Hall, U.C., Office of the President  
Anthony Williams, California Medical Association  
Henry Lamberton, Psy.D., Loma Linda University School of Medicine  
Catherine Lomen-Hoerth, Ph.D., U.C., San Francisco  
Karen Miotto, U.C., Los Angeles  
Steve Rosenberg, M.D.  
Donna Elliott, Keck School of Medicine  
Julie D'Angelo Fellmeth, Center for Public Interest Law  
Jonathan Reitman, L.A. Physicians Justice Committee

**Agenda Item 2      Approval of the January 31, 2008 Minutes**

It was M/S/C (Chang/Schipske) to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2008 committee meeting.

**Agenda Item 3      Opening Remarks by the Chair**

Ms. Yaroslavsky thanked and welcomed those in attendance, explaining that this meeting was the first of two Education Committee (EC) meetings on the topic of medical student/physician education regarding substance abuse and wellness in anticipation of the sunset of the board's diversion program. The second meeting will be in Sacramento on April 24, 2008.

**Agenda Item 4      Discussion of Using Education to Impact Medical Student and Physician Wellness and Impairment**

Many speakers chose to ignore the letter of invitation sent to them by the board, which asked specifically and solely for educational ideas in anticipation of the end of the diversion program, and instead voiced their concern and displeasure with the impending demise of the program. Some expressed the hope that a similar kind of program would be created to serve patient protection and physicians' needs, as well.

Attempting to bring the conversation back on point, Department of Consumer Affairs Supervising Legal Counsel Anita Scuri mentioned that Business and Professions Code section 2089 requires curriculum in medical schools to include alcoholism and other substance dependency detection and treatment. Representatives from the UC system noted that there are mandatory orientation and integration programs and also wellness programs available that students may voluntarily participate in. Medical students and residents at UCLA may use a confidential mental health care service, as impairment prevention. UCSD also offers a suicide prevention program.

The Physician Assessment and Clinical Education (PACE) Program offers classes to physicians who have been disciplined by the Medical Board on prescribing practices, ethics, anger management, boundaries, balance in physicians' lives, and other courses related to physician wellness.

A request for data on the effectiveness of wellness courses was made, and concern was expressed for the cost of private substance-abuse programs when the Medical Board's diversion program is gone. In addition, concern was noted that fewer cases might be reported to wellness programs, since to act, the schools would have to report the physician directly to the board's enforcement program, and not its former, confidential diversion program.

Ms. Yaroslavsky asked the UC representatives to provide in writing prior to the committee's next meeting a summary of what they are doing regarding wellness and impairment. Ms. Johnston asked the speakers to provide to the committee a point of contact at UC who would be willing to contribute to the board's focus at present, which is education on the topic at hand.

The board was urged to make information available to medical students and physicians regarding access to treatment programs and warning signs regarding addiction, drug abuse, and mental illness. A request was made of the committee that if medical schools were to be required to offer certain educational courses regarding wellness, that the board meet with educators from all of the schools first. The board was urged to speak to medical students in their classes about its enforcement program, physician stressors, and, again, resources to deal with those stressors. Interactive discussions and case studies were encouraged as learning tools, rather than lectures.

#### **Agenda Item 5      Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda**

A medical school representative noted that medical educators and deans of students have feared that if they are required to report behavioral and substance abuse problems to the Medical Board that they are put in the "awkward position" of having a student whom they do not know will ever be licensed. Ms. Johnston said the board wishes to further educate interested parties and change the culture of both the approach to dealing with substance abusing medical students and physicians and also the way the board is regarded, which many times in her experience has been inaccurately.

It was suggested the board fund a research project at the medical school level to determine how to get the best outcome from existing educational programs, as part of its goal to create new and effective programs. In addition, the medical schools could meet and exchange information about best practices to see what works and also determine if there are any gaps.

Ms. Yaroslavsky suggested that even though seven out of eight of the state's medical schools declined the board's offer a couple of years ago to provide the board's newsletter to its students, that we do so once again.

#### **Agenda Item 6      Agenda Items for April 24, 2008 Meeting**

Ms. Chang asked for information about continuing medical education in this area – who's doing it and how many courses are available.

Dr. Salomonson asked if board members Gerri Schipske, R.N. and Frank Zerunyan, J.D. could help educate the committee about ethics and substance abuse courses required of registered nurses and attorneys, respectively.

Ms. Johnston asked all medical schools to present on paper what their current educational components are on this subject – what the students are being taught.

The California Medical Association was asked to present a wish list in writing dealing with substance abuse/impairment and wellness, and to separate it from the diversion program.

Ms. Chang asked the medical schools also to inform the committee about how much information they provide students about the Medical Board as a part of their education on substance abuse and wellness.

Ms. Yaroslavsky suggested that the committee should send a letter to each of the participants at the meeting from the medical schools, stating specifically what the committee wants in writing from them at its next meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 7      Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:47 p.m.