



# MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

Protecting consumers by advancing high quality, safe medical care.

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Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California | Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency | Department of Consumer Affairs

**Four Points by Sheraton International Airport  
4900 Duckhorn Dr  
Sacramento, CA 95834  
Thursday, May 15, 2025  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, May 15, 2025**

***Due to timing for invited guests to provide their presentations, the agenda items below are listed in the order they were presented.***

**Members Present:**

Kristina D. Lawson, J.D., President  
James M. Healzer, M.D., Vice President  
Michelle A. Bholat, M.D., Secretary  
Irving Ayala-Rodriguez, M.D.  
Anni Chung  
Asif Mahmood, M.D.  
Marina Torres, J.D.  
Richard E. Thorp, M.D.  
Veling W. Tsai, M.D.  
Felix C. Yip, M.D.

**Members Absent:**

Jodi Remke, J.D.  
Eserick "TJ" Watkins

**Staff Present:**

Aaron Bone, Chief of Legislation and Public Affairs  
Sean Eichelkraut, Information Technology Manager II  
Rachel Gilbride, Information Officer I  
Douglas Hock, Chief of Licensing  
Keoni Lucas, Staff Services Manager I  
Marina O'Connor, Deputy Director  
Anthony Parker, Associate Governmental Program Analyst  
Dino Pierini, Business Services Officer  
Alexandria Schembra, Public Information Officer II  
Sharlene Smith, Chief of Enforcement  
Angelaya Strother, Associate Governmental Program Analyst  
Reji Varghese, Executive Director  
Kerrie Webb, Legal Counsel

## **Agenda Item 1      Call to Order/Roll Call/Establishment of a Quorum**

Kristina D. Lawson called the meeting of the Medical Board of California (Board) to order on Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 9:04 A.M. A quorum was present and due notice was provided to all interested parties.

## **Agenda Item 2      Public Comments on Items not on the Agenda ([Link to Video](#))**

[Public comments on Agenda Item 2 were made by:](#) Marcus Friedman, Alka Airy, Tina Minasian, Eric Andrist, Maria Ibarra-Navarrette, Marian Hollingsworth, Michele Monserratt-Ramos, Pat Irving, Suzanna Zaraszky, Kimberly Turbin, Arnoldo Torres, Tracy Dominguez, and Xavier DeLeon.

## **Agenda Item 3      Approval of Minutes from the February 13-14, Quarterly Board Meeting ([Link to Video](#))**

**Dr. Healzer moved to approve the minutes S:/ Dr. Bholat, 9-0-1 (Dr. Ayala Rodriguez Abstained; 2 Absent)**

[Public comments on Agenda Item 3 were made by:](#) Pat Irving.

## **Agenda Item 4      President's Report, including notable accomplishments and priorities, and communications with interested parties ([Link to Video](#))**

Ms. Lawson briefly discussed AB 408 (Physician Health and Wellness Program) and her meeting with the Assembly of Business and Professions committee regarding the bill.

Dr. Thorp reported to have a meeting with chronic pain advocates and Mr. Varghese about the implementation of the opioid guidelines

Dr. Healzer reported that he, along with Ms. Webb and Mr. Bone, met with members of the California Society of Anesthesiologist to discuss AB 985.

There were no public comments on this agenda item.

## **Agenda Item 5      Executive Management Reports ([Link to Video](#))**

Mr. Eichelkraut provided the technology update including on, among other things, staffing, IOS application, the Direct Online Certification Submission (DOCS), Volunteer Physician Registry, the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) Survey, wallet card license generator, Breeze online complaint form, electronic renewal process, and the Complaint Tracking System.

Mr. Hock provided a Licensing Program update, including on, among other things, updates to applicant procedures through Breeze, continuing to scan and shred items per the retention schedule, the continued efforts for to go paperless, medical schools can submit transcripts and documents through and reregistration through (DOCS), webmaster inquiries, licensing outreach events, and the Consumer Information Unit.

Ms. Smith provided the Enforcement Program summary and provided updates on, collaboration efforts with Health Quality Investigation Unit and Health Quality Enforcement Section at the Attorney General's Office, Central Complaint Unit, Complainant Liaison Unit, and the Probation Unit.

Mr. Varghese provided the administrative summary, including outreach events he has participated in, updates on staffing and the vacancy rate. He reported that the vacancy rate is 14.8%.

Mr. Varghese proceeded with the budget update and stated that the budget remains unchanged. As of February 2025, the Board is looking forward to repaying two outstanding loans in the amount of \$14 million plus interest this fiscal year (June 2025). Based upon projections expenses are coming under budget. Starting FY 25/FY 26, the Board will not need loans.

Mr. Varghese also provided an update on media relations and external communications and provided a detailed review of the budget charts within the materials.

Board members and staff discussed the Executive Management Reports.

[Public comments on Agenda Item 5 were made by:](#) Tina Minasian, Marcus Friedman, Alka Airy, Marian Hollingsworth, Eric Andrist, and Kimberly Turbin.

## **Agenda Item 6      Updates from External Stakeholders ([Link to Video](#))**

Judie Bucciarelli, from Board and Bureau Relations for DCA, among other updates, reported the Governor's reorganization plan, hybrid telework transition for the Executive Order (EO) N-22-25, new compliance in equity officer, Board Member Orientation Training (BMOT), and thanked the Board and the Board staff for their dedicated efforts for consumer protection.

Kathleen Nicholls and Stephanie Whitley provided the Health Quality Investigation Unit (HQIU) update. Among other information, Ms. Nicholls discussed that HQIU has 11 investigator vacancies, which is a 13% vacancy rate. Staff are actively participating in recruitment events statewide. HQIU has 14 new investigators going through the field program.

Ms. Whitley discussed the Division of Investigation (DOI) multi-week training for new investigators. She also stated that HQIU continues to make progress on the pending workload and cases over a year old. She states that HQIU leadership continues to hold regular meetings with Board staff.

Board Members and external stakeholders discussed the reports.

[Public comments on Agenda item 6 were made by:](#) Monty Goddard.

**Agenda Item 7      Discussion and Possible Action on Legislation ([Link to Video](#))**

Mr. Bone presented on the following bills:

**AB 360 (Papan) Menopause**

Proposes that the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), in consultation with the Board, the Osteopathic Medical Board, and other entities conduct an assessment of physician education and training in menopause diagnosis and management. Following the study, HCAI would be charged with submitting a report to the Legislature on the findings and recommendations. Board staff recommended a support if amended position to clarify that the Board's role is limited to attending HCAI-led stakeholder meetings and electronically distributing communications to the Board's licensees in furtherance of this effort.

Members and staff discussed the bill.

**Dr. Mahmood moved to take a support, if amended position on the bill; S:/ Dr. Yip 10-0-0 (2 absent)**

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Lucas Evensen, Savannah Dominicus, Ryan Spencer, and Marcus Friedman

**AB 408 (Berman) Physician Health and Wellness Program**

This is a Board-sponsored bill that would establish a Physician Health and Wellness Program that meets nationally recognized best practices for physician health programs. This bill was passed out of the Assembly Business and Professions Committee and the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

Members and staff discussed the bill.

Public [comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Dr. Chrsitina Menor, MD, Kay Funk, Marcus Friedman, Tina Minasian, Lucas Evensen, Carmen Balber, Alka Airy, Ryan Spencer, Xavier DeLeon, Maria Ibarra-Navarrette, Eric Andrist, Marian Hollingsworth, Michele Monserratt-Ramos, and Tracy Dominguez.

**AB 432 (Bauer- Kahan) Menopause**

Requires physicians with certain specialties who have a patient population composed of 25 percent or more of adult women under 65 years old to complete 10 percent of all required continuing medical education (CME) hours in a course in perimenopause, menopause, and postmenopausal care. Board staff recommended an oppose unless amended position, and to request the author to remove the language that mandates CME.

**Dr. Healzer moved to take an oppose, unless amended position on the bill; S:/ Dr. Mahmood 10-0-0 (2 absent)**

Members and staff discussed the bill.

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Ryan Spencer and Angela Hill.

**AB 489 (Bonta) Health Care Professions: Deceptive Terms or Letters: Artificial intelligence**

Prohibits artificial intelligence systems or similar technologies from misrepresenting “themselves” as licensed health professionals. Board staff recommended a support position.

**Dr. Tsai moved to support the bill; S:/ Dr. Healzer 10-0-0 (2 absent)**

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Lucas Evensen and Ryan Spencer.

**AB 742 (Elharwary) Department of Consumer Affairs: Licensing: Applicants who are Descendants of Slaves**

Requires the various licensing boards within the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to prioritize applications for licensure from person who are descendants of American slaves. This bill is contingent upon enactment of SB 518, which establishes the Bureau for Descendants of American Slavery.

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

There were no public comments on the bill.

The Board did not take a position on this bill.

**AB 876 (Flora) Nurse Anesthesiologists: Scope of Practice**

Seeks to codify the scope of practice for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs).

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

The Board did not take a position on this bill.

[Comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Dr. Chrsitina Menor, , Lucas Evensen, Charles Alan Griffith, Melanie Roe, Katherine Bowles, Jeff Carey, Kristen Roman, and Jonathan McGarrity.

**AB 967 (Valencia) Physicians and Surgeons: Licensure: Expedite fee**

Seeks to expedite the licensing process for out-of-state physicians by establishing an option to pay up to a \$250 fee. Staff recommended a support if amended position.

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

**Dr. Thorp moved to oppose the bill S:/ Dr. Mahmood 10-0-0 (2 absent)**

[Public comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Lucas Evensen and Katie Guthrie.

**AB 985 (Ahrens) Anesthesiologists Assistants**

Establishes the Anesthesiologist Assistant Practice Act, which authorizes anesthesiologist assistants (AA), as defined, to work under the direction and supervision of anesthesiologists and assist in the development and implementation of anesthesia care plans for patients.

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

The Board decided to take no action.

[Public comments on agenda item were made by:](#) Dr. Chrsitina Menor, Lucas Evensen, Shane Angus, Melanie Roe, and Charles Alan Griffith.

**SB 387 (Rubio) Physicians and Surgeons: Special Faculty Permits: Comprehensive Cancer Center**

Updates the definition of “academic medical center” (AMC) to include a facility that is a National Cancer Institute (NCI) -designated comprehensive cancer center, as specified. Accordingly, such an institute would be authorized to sponsor individuals for a special faculty permit (SFP) to practice medicine within that organization.

Board members and staff discussed the bill.

**Dr. Mahmood moved to support the bill, including the proposed amendments that would allow City of Hope to qualify and ensure Cedar Sinai maintains its position on the review committee; S:/ Dr. Tsai 9-0-1 (Dr. Yip abstained; 2 absent)**

[Comments on this agenda item were made by:](#) Dr. Mark Stewart, Alfredo Medina, and Lucas Evensen.

**SB 470 (Laird) Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act: Teleconference**

Extends the sunset date for laws authorizing remote meetings for certain state bodies. Staff recommended a support position.

**Dr. Healzer moved to support bill S:/Dr. Thorp 10-0-0 (2 absent)**

There were no public comments on the bill.

**SB 508 (Valladares) Out of-state physicians and surgeons: Telehealth: License Exemption**

Expands an existing licensing exemption for out-of-state physicians treating life-threatening conditions via telehealth. Board staff recommended an oppose position.

**Dr. Thorp made a motion to oppose the bill; S:/ Dr. Mahmood 10-0-0 (2 absent)**

Public [comments on this agenda item were made by](#): Lucas Evensen.

**SB 626 (Smallwood-Cuevas) Perinatal Health Screenings and Treatment**

Aims to improve perinatal mental health care by requiring insurers and providers to follow ACOG guidelines or other guidelines. Board staff recommended a support, if amended position, and requested delegated authority to the president and vice president to work with staff on possible amendments.

**Dr. Mahmood voted to support staff recommendation S:/ Dr. Thorp 10-0-0 (2 absent)**

Public [comments on this agenda item were made by](#): Cassie .

**SB 641 (Ashby) Department of Consumer Affairs and Department of Real Estate: States of Emergency: Waivers and Exemptions**

Authorizes DCA licensing boards to waive certain requirements during declared disasters. Staff recommended a support, if amended position to seek clarifying changes.

Board members and staff discussed the bill and suggested amendments.

**Dr. Tsai moved to take a support if amended position on the bill S:/Dr. Healzer 10-0-0 (2 absent)**

There were no public comments on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 9      Discussion and Possible Action Related to the Midwifery Advisory Council (MAC) ([Link to Video](#))**

Mr. Hock, Chief of Licensing provided an update on the previous MAC meeting that was held on April 3, 2025. He discussed the actions that were taken during the previous meeting. Mr. Hock requested that the Board approve the appointment of Karen Roslie for the public member position, and approve the agenda items for the September 11, 2025 MAC Meeting.

**Dr. Thorp moved to approve the requested action S:/ Dr. Mahmood 10-0-0 (2 Absent)**

No public comments were made on agenda item 9.

**Agenda Item 10      Discussion and Possible Action on Recommendations from the Special Faculty Permit Review Committee ([Link to Video](#))**

Dr. Healzer discussed that on March 5, 2025, the Special Faculty Permit Review Committee (SFPRC) held a meeting to consider candidates for special faculty appointments. Dr. Healzer presented on the applications for Dr. Somnath Chattopadhyay, proposed for an appointment at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, and for Dr. Alexandre Lellouch, considered for Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

**Dr. Yip moved to approve the special faculty permits for Dr. Somnath Chattopadhyay and Dr. Alexandre Lellouch S:/ Dr. Tsai 10-0-0 (2 Absent)**

No comment made on agenda item.

**Agenda Item 11      Updated from the Physician Assistant Board ([Link to Video](#))**

Dr. Tsai shared that he serves on the Physician Assistants Board in an ex officio capacity. He noted that the Board recently completed its sunset review and discussed upcoming agenda items, adjustments to quarterly meetings, an increase in licensure activity, and updates to their diversion program.

Board members discussed the update.

No public comments were made on agenda item 11.

**Agenda Item 12      Future Agenda Items ([Link to Video](#))**

Dr. Healzer requested a presentation from the PACE program.

Dr. Thorp requested a presentation on the problems in the system of healthcare.

Dr. Yip requested a presentation from the Joint Commission.

Dr. Ayla-Rodriguez requested a discussion on AB 890 nurse practitioners 103/104.

Dr. Mahmood requested a presentation on artificial intelligence in medicine.

[Public comments on Agenda item 12 were made by:](#) Monty Goddard.

**Agenda Item 13    Adjournment**

**Kristina D. Lawson adjourned the meeting at 3:30 P.M.**

Signature on File

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August 21, 2025

Kristina D. Lawson, J.D., President

Date

Signature on File

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August 21, 2025

Reji Varghese, Executive Director

Date