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***Journal of Medical Regulation* examines state medical board exposure to threats of violence**

National study urges medical licensing boards to be aware of the possibility of threats of violence aimed at state medical board members and staff

(DALLAS, Nov. 11, 2013) – A survey conducted by the Federation of State Medical Boards Research and Education Foundation (FSMB Foundation), published in the Fall 2013 edition of the [*Journal of Medical Regulation*](#), reveals that many state medical boards have had to deal with threats of violence directed against board members and support staff as they go about their work.

Nearly three of four state medical boards who responded to the FSMB Foundation survey said that in the history of their boards, board members and/or staff had experienced either explicit or implied threats of violence. Thirty seven of the nation's 70 state and territorial boards responded to the survey, which was conducted by authors Kelly Alfred, Timothy Turner, and Aaron Young, PhD.

Many of the threats directed at board members occurred after board meetings or hearings and were made by either a physician or a family member of a physician. Most of the threats were verbal, including threats of death.

"The stressful conditions that often accompany state medical board investigations and disciplinary actions can create highly contentious and emotionally charged environments – which could be considered precursors to violence or violent threats," the authors state.

The survey shows that state boards have taken a variety of measures in response to the threat of violence, ranging from posting law enforcement personnel at meetings or offices to issuing restraining orders or arranging for private security for individuals. Monitored alarm systems and extra security measures, such as video monitoring, are also used at state medical board facilities.

While less than half of the responding boards are satisfied with their security measures, only 26 percent are planning to increase security, citing the initial and ongoing costs for additional or new security as the primary barrier.

Although the survey was limited in scope, the authors say it suggests that “the state medical board community should be aware of the possibility of violent threats.”

“Since it is impossible to know if and when a violent threat may be carried out, understanding the risk factors and formulating prevention and threat assessment policies may be the most effective approach to addressing the issue,” the authors state.

The article, “[State Medical Board Exposure to Threats of Violence: A Survey by the FSMB Foundation](#),” is the free featured article in the current issue of the *Journal of Medical Regulation*. Also featured in the current issue of the *Journal of Medical Regulation (JMR)*:

- The latest in a series of commentaries based on historical articles from the archives of the *JMR*, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2013. In the latest installment of this series, authors Mari Robinson, JD, and Leigh Hopper offer their perspectives on an article from 1914 that proposed a system of national licensure for physicians.
- Guidelines recently published by the Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine aimed at helping physicians prevent complaints from patients about informed-consent discussions they feel are inadequate or confusing.

The *Journal of Medical Regulation (JMR)* is a quarterly publication of the Federation of State Medical Boards. To learn more about the *JMR* or to subscribe, please visit <http://jmr.fsmb.org>. The *JMR* website includes an archive of articles dating to 1967 available free of charge to researchers and individuals interested in medical regulation. Remaining volumes covering the years 1913-1966 will be added to the *JMR* archive in the near future.

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About the FSMB

The FSMB is a national non-profit organization representing all medical boards within the United States and its territories that license and discipline allopathic and osteopathic physicians and, in some jurisdictions, other health care professionals. It assists these state and territorial medical boards as they go about their mandate of protecting the public’s health, safety and welfare. The FSMB leads by promoting excellence in medical practice, licensure, and regulation.