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Journal of Medical Regulation Offers Historical Perspectives on Physician Licensing

Latest in series of articles examines various highlights as a part of FSMB Centennial

Dallas, Texas – In the second and third in a series of articles celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), the latest issue of the *Journal of Medical Regulation* explores several key milestones in the organization’s history – including the selection of its first female president in 1989.

In “The History of the Federation of State Medical Boards: Part Two – Beginnings, Growth and Challenges, 1912-1929,” authors David Johnson and Humayun J. Chaudhry, DO, explore the earliest years of the organization that serves as the voice of the nation’s state and territorial medical boards.

Among the FSMB’s earliest challenges was establishing itself as a true unifying force for state boards, according to the authors, despite having no permanent office or headquarters, no paid staff, nor monetary resources. It began to make progress early on as it moved to bring consistency to the examination process for physicians – including making examinations mandatory.

Johnson and Chaudhry chronicle the growth of state boards’ disciplinary power as the 20th century progressed, noting that in their early years, state boards lacked even the basic ability to revoke licenses. Over time, their work in bringing consistency to medical education standards and responding to the public’s growing desire for patient protections created a strong regulatory network that today provides oversight of the nation’s more than 850,000 licensed physicians.

In a second article, Susan Behrens, MD, the first woman to be elected FSMB president, recalls the historic struggle to break a gender barrier among the nation’s medical regulators in the 1980s.

Dr. Behrens worked her way up the ranks of the governance structure at the FSMB at a time, she writes, when the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s "was starting to have an impact . . . and a few pioneering women were finding themselves in positions and places of authority unknown to women just a decade earlier." She became president in 1989 after winning a contentious election as a write-in candidate.

Since her election, women have increasingly occupied leadership roles within the state medical board community. Women currently serve as the executive director of 37 of the nation's 70 state medical boards and three of the five most recent elected chairs of the FSMB have been women.

The current issue also includes:

- The FSMB's new policy on the appropriate use of social media and social networking in medical practice, in its entirety. The new policy was adopted by the FSMB House of Delegates in 2012 and has been widely referenced in the media.
- A commentary by Robert K. Twillman, PhD, examining the rise of so-called "pill mills" in the United States -- rogue medical clinics that have contributed to the nation's opioid abuse problem. Dr. Twillman argues that U.S. policies aimed at eliminating pill mills must be carefully structured so they don't harm the ability of legitimate pain clinics to treat patients.

The *Journal of Medical Regulation* is a quarterly publication of the Federation of State Medical Boards. To learn about the articles in this issue, or to subscribe to the Journal, visit www.FSMB.org and select "Publications and Media."

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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.