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Federation of State Medical Boards Recognizes Electronic Health Records Can Assist Physicians in Assessing Ongoing Clinical Competence for Licensure

Washington, D.C. – The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) announced today that it recognizes widespread adoption of electronic health records could be used by doctors to both improve patient outcomes and assess ongoing clinical competence for purposes of medical licensure. The FSMB made the announcement at the “Advancing Electronic Health Records Adoption and Meaningful Use” forum hosted by the Health Industry Forum of Brandeis University and *Health Affairs*.

Humayun Chaudhry, D.O., FACP, president and CEO of the FSMB, discussed the positive impact anticipated by the FSMB as physicians utilize electronic health records as a tool to assess ongoing clinical competence for medical licensure. In April, the FSMB’s House of Delegates approved a framework for Maintenance of Licensure (MOL) that recommends that physicians, as a condition of license renewal, “should provide evidence of participation in a program of professional development and lifelong learning.”

“As the Federation of State Medical Boards works with its member boards in the months and years ahead to implement Maintenance of Licensure, it is clear that electronic health records will be of value as doctors fulfill that professional obligation and demonstrate ongoing clinical competence,” said Dr. Chaudhry.

The MOL framework adopted by the FSMB recommends that physicians continuously engage in three specific types of activities: reflective self-assessment, assessment of knowledge and skills, and demonstration of performance in practice. These activities should be practice-relevant; informed by objective data sources, such as practice data; and required of all licensed physicians. Although all three components of MOL would be positively impacted by the adoption by physicians of health IT, the first and third components – reflective self-assessment and the demonstration of performance in practice – would likely be impacted most by EHRs.

“Once Maintenance of Licensure is implemented by state medical and osteopathic boards, it should encourage and support lifelong learning by physicians and create a system to confirm practice improvement efforts,” Dr. Chaudhry said. “This will be a challenging task and will require collaboration and cooperation across many sectors of the health care system. At the very core of this effort will be the need for a robust system of data and information exchange – exactly the kind of infrastructure that has been envisioned by proponents of electronic health records.”

“By utilizing health information technology, physicians under MOL could continually improve the care that patients receive from them, could better understand the impact of their care on patient outcomes and bring their practices in line with the latest medical research,” said Freda Bush, M.D., chair of the FSMB’s Board of Directors. “It would also enable physicians to use real-time comparative practice data to guide ongoing practice improvement efforts.”

For more information about FSMB’s Maintenance of Licensure initiative, please visit www.fsmb.org or contact Drew Carlson at dcarlson@fsmb.org or (817) 868-4043.

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) is a national non-profit organization representing the 70 medical boards of the United States and its territories. The FSMB leads by promoting excellence in medical practice, licensure, and regulation as the national resource and voice on behalf of state medical boards in their protection of the public.

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