

# Newsline

Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, Inc.



July/August 2010

## IAMRA 2010 begins work on best practices in medical regulation

On Sept. 26-29, more than 225 regulatory experts from 32 countries will meet in Philadelphia, Pa., to begin the work to define best practices in medical regulation. The International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA) 9th Biennial Conference on Medical Regulation will be a three-day event featuring many interactive, small group sessions that will contribute directly to the documentation of recognized and proven best practices.

Begun in 1994, IAMRA's biennial conferences provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and discussion of common problems affecting the delivery of health care and the regulation of medical practice around the world. The FSMB, the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates and the National Board of Medical Examiners are co-hosting the 2010 event, which is to be the first in a series of conferences on "Best Practices in Medical Regulation."

In addition to a broad geographical array of jurisdictions, attendees represent broad organizational perspectives. Leaders of national and state regulatory authorities, medical schools, health and welfare ministries and others will be in attendance.

"The IAMRA conference provides an excellent opportunity for nations to collaborate in the development of best practices and explore opportunities to enhance public protection by promoting excellence in medical licensure and regulation," said Humayun Chaudhry, D.O., FACP, president and CEO of the FSMB. "The FSMB is very honored to host this event along with our partners the NBME and the ECFMG."

### Enhanced relevancy, interactivity and engagement

In response to feedback from past conferences, IAMRA 2010 attendees will engage in focused, facilitated small group discussions. The small group sessions will speak directly to the issues participants manage on a daily basis in the areas of registration and licensure, complaints and resolutions, and quality assurance or maintenance of licensure.

Three progressive small group sessions will allow for the sharing of personal experiences in the three content areas, the identification of common themes or principles and the real-world challenges of implementing best practices. At the close of the conference, participants will come together for presentations summarizing the results of each content area and a discussion of possible next steps.

After IAMRA 2010, work will continue. Best practices identified during the conference will be further developed and refined. The goal is to present results for review and adoption by IAMRA at its next biennial conference in 2012.

### Learning from experts in medical regulation

IAMRA 2010 offers multiple opportunities to learn from experts in medical regulation. The Introductory Plenary features a moderated discussion of post-licensure quality assurance programs by representatives from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, Canada, and the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom.



## Enhanced SPEX seen as important assessment tool

A newly enhanced Special Purpose Examination (SPEX) debuted in April 2010 with a stronger focus on patient care. A joint FSMB and National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) initiative, the SPEX is a one-day, computerized exam designed to evaluate currency of general clinical knowledge for undifferentiated practice.

SPEX is part of the Post-Licensure Assessment System (PLAS), which provides comprehensive objective and personalized assessments of physicians for whom there is a question regarding clinical competence. The SPEX is used by state medical boards to re-examine a licensed or previously licensed physician's ongoing level of basic medical knowledge. Situations in which a medical board may require a physician to take the SPEX include endorsement of licensure, reinstatement, or reactivation of a license after a period of inactivity.

"The SPEX blueprint and content was completely overhauled by the PLAS Program Committee, which comprises physicians from the practice, academic and state board communities, to guarantee the exam is relevant to the current practice of medicine," said Andrea Ciccone, assistant vice president of Post-Licensure Assessment Services of the NBME.

### How state medical and osteopathic boards use SPEX

Each year, approximately 300 physicians take the SPEX; approximately 53 percent are board-sponsored and 47 percent are self-nominated. Physicians taking the exam are primarily seeking licensure by endorsement.

"We consider the SPEX an important tool for assessing basic medical knowledge," said Rick Whitehouse, Esq., executive director of the State Medical Board of Ohio. "Ohio is probably a power user; we depend on the SPEX."

The Ohio board may require passage of the SPEX before granting or restoring licensure to physicians who have been out of practice for two years or more.

According to Mari Robinson, executive director of the Texas Medical Board,

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Dr. Joanna Flynn, chair of the newly created Medical Board of Australia, will address participants on the major changes made to Australia's medical regulatory system. There are also many opportunities for networking as well as planned social events to help build lasting, professional relationships.

The IAMRA 2010 program was

designed to ensure relevance to all participants, regardless of their level of expertise, resources or the current status of their regulatory processes and infrastructure. On Sept. 26, an optional workshop titled The IAMRA Institute will provide a foundation for the conference work to follow. During the workshop, leading regulatory bodies and assessment organizations

will showcase innovative programs, explore the role of formal assessment, discuss how to design an effective licensure application, and highlight strategies to educate stakeholders.

For more information on IAMRA 2010, please visit the conference website at <http://iamra2010.nbme.org>. 

### IAMRA Membership List

#### Albania

- Order of Physicians of Albania

#### Australia

- Australian Medical Council
- Medical Board of the Australian Capital Territory
- Medical Board of Queensland
- Medical Board of South Australia
- Medical Board of Western Australia
- Medical Council of Tasmania
- Medical Practitioners Board of Victoria
- New South Wales Medical Board

#### Belgium

- National Council of the Order of Physicians

#### Canada

- College des Médecins du Québec
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Prince Edward Island
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan
- Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada
- Medical Council of Canada

#### Cape Verde

- Ordem dos Médicos de Cabo Verde

#### Egypt

- Egyptian Medical Syndicate

#### Germany

- German Medical Association (Partner)

#### Ghana

- Medical and Dental Council Ghana

#### India

- Delhi Medical Council
- Gujarat Medical Council

- Karnataka Medical Council
- Medical Council of India

#### Ireland

- Medical Council of Ireland

#### Italy

- National Federation for the Orders of Doctors and Dentists

#### Korea (South)

- National Health Personnel Licensing Examination Board

#### Malawi

- Medical Council of Malawi

#### Mauritius

- Medical Council of Mauritius

#### Namibia

- Medical and Dental Council of Namibia

#### Netherlands

- Centraal Informatiepunt Beroepen Gazondheidszorg (Partner)
- Royal Dutch Medical Association, Department of Postgraduate Training and Registration

#### New Zealand

- Medical Council of New Zealand

#### Nigeria

- Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria

#### Norway

- Norwegian Registration Authority for Health Personnel

#### Pakistan

- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan (Partner)
- Foundation University Medical College (Partner)
- Islamic International Medical College (Partner)
- Pakistan Medical and Dental Council
- Shifa College of Medicine (Partner)

#### Portugal

- Ordem dos Médicos

#### Sierra Leone

- Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Council

#### Singapore

- Singapore Medical Council

#### South Africa

- Health Professions Council of South

Africa, Medical and Dental Professions Board

#### Sudan

- Sudan Medical Council

#### Taiwan (Republic of China)

- Department of Health, Bureau of Medical Affairs
- Ministry of Examination (Partner)

#### United Arab Emirates

- Center for Healthcare Planning and Quality, Dubai Healthcare City Licensure Board
- Health Authority Abu Dhabi


#### United Kingdom

- Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (Partner)
- General Medical Council
- Health Professions Council (Partner)
- Royal College of Physicians of London (Partner)

#### United States


- Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners
- American Association of Osteopathic Examiners
- American Osteopathic Association (Partner)
- Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates
- Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States
- International Association of Medical Colleges (Partner)
- Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine
- Medical Board of California
- Michigan Department of Community Health, Bureau of Health Professions
- National Board of Medical Examiners
- National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (Partner)
- Oklahoma State Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision
- Oregon Board of Medical Examiners

#### Zimbabwe

- Medical and Dental Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe 

## FSMB Bylaws Committee seeks feedback from medical boards

The FSMB Bylaws Committee is interested in receiving suggestions from FSMB member boards for amendments or revisions to the FSMB *Bylaws* in advance of the Committee's Oct. 30, 2010, meeting. Suggestions and specific language for proposed changes to the *Bylaws* should be submitted by Oct. 15 to

Bylaws Committee Chair Ralph Loomis, M.D., c/o Pat McCarty, FSMB, 400 Fuller Wiser Road, Suite 300, Euless, TX 76039; fax (817) 868-4167; or by e-mail to pmcarty@fsmb.org. To access a copy of the FSMB *Bylaws*, please visit the "About Us" section of the FSMB website at [www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org). 

## California bill reverses legislation merging naturopathic, osteopathic boards


In August, Gov. Schwarzenegger signed a bill reversing 2009 legislation that called for the addition of two naturopathic doctors as members of the Osteopathic Medical Board of California (OMBC) and the creation of a Naturopathic Doctors Committee within the OMBC.

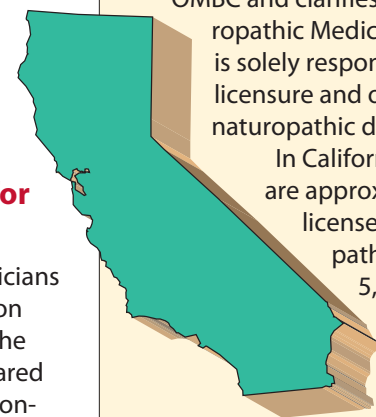
"The OMBC is extremely pleased with the outcome of this more than year-long intensive effort," said Geraldine O'Shea, D.O., president of the OMBC. "In addition to removing the two naturopathic doctor positions, the bill adds two public members to the

OMBC and clarifies that the Naturopathic Medicine Committee is solely responsible for the licensure and oversight of naturopathic doctors."

In California, there are approximately 300 licensed naturopathic doctors and 5,000 licensed osteopathic physicians. Adding two naturopathic doctors to the

existing seven-member OMBC would have created a board that no longer reflects the licensee population and would have required naturopathic board members to evaluate the professional practice of osteopathic physicians, potentially creating serious issues related to the board's ability to protect public health, said Lisa Robin, senior vice president of Advocacy and Member Services. The FSMB advocated on behalf of the OMBC's efforts to reverse the legislation.

For more information, please contact Geraldine O'Shea, D.O., president of the OMBC, at [osteopathic@dca.ca.gov](mailto:osteopathic@dca.ca.gov), or Lisa Robin at [lrobin@fsmb.org](mailto:lrobin@fsmb.org) or (202) 530-4872. 



### Enhanced SPEX – continued from page one

the Texas board uses the SPEX for initial licensure procedures and enforcements.

"Although physicians seeking initial licensure are always very afraid to take a general purpose exam after years in specialized practice, there are good ways to study and we've had good results," Robinson said.

Passing the SPEX may be included as a term in disciplinary orders issued in Texas, she said. SPEX can be the only term of the order or it can be combined with other terms. In cases where SPEX is required, physicians are given a one-year period to pass on three attempts.

"We believe SPEX is a good tool for both sides of the house," Robinson said.

### Enhancing exam content, design and scoring

By design, the SPEX is tailored to evaluate knowledge of practicing physicians who have passed a rigorous exam for initial licensure. In a process that began in late 2008, the exam blueprint and content were updated with an increased focus on patient care and tasks physicians perform in daily practice. Mechanisms of disease were given less focus. The 336 items now on the exam were derived from the United States Medical Licensing Examination® Step 3 item pool.

Exam content is structured along two primary dimensions: disease categories and physician tasks. Disease categories include areas such as mental health, cardiovascular, respiratory and female reproductive health. Physician tasks are structured as competency-based objectives such as applying scientific concepts, formulating a diagnosis and managing patient care.


SPEX scores are reported on a two-

digit scale, with 75 as the recommended passing score. The score report also includes a performance profile, which is a graphical representation of the examinee's performance along multiple dimensions evaluated by the SPEX. The profile provides a more comprehensive picture of the examinee's strengths and weaknesses and is intended for use by the examinee to inform continuing development needs. Dimensions include clinical encounters, physician tasks, clinical settings, disorders by organ system and patient age.

### Is SPEX an effective screen for re-entry?

Historically, 30 percent of physicians taking the SPEX fail. The key question is whether the 70 percent passing the exam are in fact qualified and prepared to practice medicine. There are no longitudinal studies available but there is anecdotal evidence.

"I don't recall seeing any of the initial applicants who passed the SPEX coming through for disciplinary hearings," Robinson said. "And disciplinary examinees absolutely do fail the SPEX more than other examinees."

A full discussion of the enhancements to the SPEX as well as comments made by Robinson and Whitehouse are available in the replay of the Aug. 19 FSMB Roundtable Call in the Member Resource Center on the FSMB website at [www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org). For more information about the SPEX, contact Frances Cain, director of the Post-Licensure Assessment System for the FSMB, at [fcain@fsmb.org](mailto:fcain@fsmb.org) or (817) 868-4022. 



## HELP US COMMEMORATE FSMB'S CENTENNIAL IN 2012!

**Preparations are under way to celebrate the Federation of State Medical Boards' Centennial year in 2012.**

The year-long celebration of the FSMB and all state medical and osteopathic boards will include:

- A written history of the FSMB
- Historical highlights of each state medical and osteopathic board
- Special events at the 2012 FSMB Annual Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas
- Website content commemorating medical regulation over the last century

**The FSMB welcomes the submission of any historical materials that could help document and celebrate the accomplishments of the FSMB and the important work of state medical and osteopathic boards. Materials could include photographs, copies of key archival documents, articles, personal memoirs and previously written board histories. Your contributions are greatly appreciated!**

Historical materials may be sent to: Linda Jordan, Librarian, FSMB, 400 Fuller Wiser Rd., Suite 300, Euless, TX 76039; or by e-mail to [ljordan@fsmb.org](mailto:ljordan@fsmb.org). For more information about the FSMB Centennial Project, please contact David Johnson, [djohnson@fsmb.org](mailto:djohnson@fsmb.org) or (817) 868-4081.

### Calendar of Events

**Sept. 23-24, 2010:** AIM Eastern and Southern Regional Meeting, Baltimore, Md.

**Sept. 26-29, 2010:** International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities 9th Conference, Philadelphia, Pa.

**Oct. 7-9, 2010:** FSMB Board of Directors Meeting, Washington, D.C.


**Oct. 14-15, 2010:** AIM Western and Central Regional Meeting, Spokane, Wash.

**Oct. 30, 2010:** FSMB *Bylaws* Committee meeting

**Nov. 4-5, 2010:** FSMB Board Attorneys Workshop, San Francisco, Calif.

**Jan. 30, 2011:** Nominating Committee meeting, Dallas

**Feb. 10-12, 2011:** FSMB Board of Directors meeting, La Jolla, Calif.

**April 28-30, 2011:** 99th FSMB Annual Meeting, Seattle, Wash. 



Please send your questions, comments and article ideas to: Drew Carlson, *FSMB Newsline*, 400 Fuller Wiser Rd., Suite 300, Euless, TX, 76039, [dcarlson@fsmb.org](mailto:dcarlson@fsmb.org), (817) 868-4043. Visit the FSMB's website at [www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org).



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