Cappers and Stearers

In the May Action Report we printed detailed disciplinary guidelines for medical misconduct, including the unethical employment of “Cappers and Stearers”. Since then many readers have asked “What in the world is a ‘Capper or Stearer’?” A Sausalito physician writes: “I’ve practiced medicine for 26 years and I’ve never come across either of these two terms.”

These are archaic terms used by the legislature many years ago to mean persons employed by a physician to solicit or procure business for him.

In olden days, cappers and steerers (or steersers) were bunco artists. A “capper” was a decoy or lure for the purpose of swindling. A “steerer” is one who gains the confidence of the person intended to be fleeced and steers or leads the victim to a place where the victim is robbed or swindled.

Today, “Cappers” and “Stearers” mean paid agents used to drum up business for professionals such as doctors, lawyers or dentists. They’re first cousins to a “Runner” - one who is paid to run accident cases to a lawyer’s office.

It’s professional misconduct for a physician to employ people - cappers, stearers, anybody - to solicit or procure business for his practice.

DRUGS - DUTY TO WARN

Pharmacists are required under state law to give warnings to patients of the harmful effects of a prescribed drug when combined with alcohol, or if the drug impairs the ability to drive (B&P 4047.4). The Pharmacy Board is required to list these “warning” drugs and to send the list to each pharmacy in the state.

A judge from San Bernardino County complains to the Medical Board that many physicians are guilty of the common practice of giving out sample pills of these “warning” drugs to patients in the office without giving the required warning about its harmful combination with alcohol, or its impairment to driving.

When dispensing in the office, physicians are reminded of their duty to keep informed of the drug requiring warning, and to properly warn their patients.

The following lists of drugs were compiled by the Pharmacy Board, and published in its Newsletter of July 1976.

LIST I

The following list of classes of drugs when taken alone or with alcohol, may impair a person’s ability to drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery.

Sedative-Hypnotics
- Barbiturates
- Chloral Hydrate (Noctec, Somnos)
- Flurazepam (Dalmane)
- Chloridiazepoxide (Lithium)
- Meprobamate (Miltown Equanil)
- Hydroxyzine (Vistaril, Alarax)
- Methaqualone (Quaalude)

Muscle Relaxants
- Methocarbamol (Robaxin)

Narcotics & Other Analgesics
- Indomethacin (Indocin)
- Pentazocine (Talwin)
- Propoxyphene (Darvon)

Phenothiazine Derivatives
- Chlorpromazine (Thorazine)
- Prochlorperazine (Compazine)
- Trifluoperazine (Stelazine)

Triyclic Antidepressants
- Amitriptyline (Elavil)
- Imipramine (Tofranil)

Antihistamines including Motion Sickness Agents, Antipruritics & some Antinauseants
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)
- Triekemamine (PBZ)
- Trimelazine (Temaril)
- Chlorpheniramine (Chlortrimeton)

All Schedule II, III, and IV depressant or narcotic controlled substances when prescribed in dosage which could have an adverse effect on a person’s ability to operate a motor vehicle.

LIST II

The following classes of drugs may have harmful effects when taken in combination with alcohol.

Alcohol Sensitizing Agents
- Disulfiram (Antabuse)
- Calcium Cyanamide (Temposil)

Mono Amine Oxidase Inhibitors (hypertensive crisis precipitated by alcoholic beverages containing Tyramine)
- Tranylcypromine (Parnate)

Hypoglycemic Agents (chronic ingestion of large amounts of alcohol may potentiate the Hypoglycemic effect)
- Tolbutamide (Orinase)
- Chlorpropamide (Diabinese)
- Phenformin (DBI)

Insulin

Vasodilators (alcohol potentiates hypotension may cause cardiovascular collapse)
- Nitroglycerin
- Isoosorbide (Isordil Sublingual)

LIST III

The following classes of Ophthalmic preparations do not enhance the effects of alcohol but may impair a person’s ability to drive a vehicle through their effects on vision.

Anticholinergic and Sympathomimetic
- Amines
- Atropine
- Cyclopentolate (Cyclogy)
- Phenylephrine
- Epinephrine
INACTIVE LICENSES

Assembly Bill 784 (Rosenthal) was recently enacted by the California State Legislature. The bill became law on August 27, 1977. It creates an inactive license category for all healing arts boards, including the Board of Medical Quality Assurance. A physician who holds an inactive license need not comply with continuing education requirements in order to renew his or her license. However, in order to restore an inactive license to active status, the physician must complete the required continuing education for a single license renewal period, or 50 hours.

A PHYSICIAN WHO HOLDS AN INACTIVE LICENSE MAY NOT ENGAGE IN THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

Inactive and active licenses are renewed at the same time, and the renewal fee is the same. Physicians may request an inactive license by writing to the Division of Licensing, Board of Medical Quality Assurance, 1430 Howe Avenue, Sacramento, California 95825.

BIRTH DATE LICENSURE RENEWAL

Recent legislation (Assembly Bill 1666) has been enacted to establish a system of license renewal based on the birth date of the physician. The biennial (every two years) renewal periods will now end on the last day of the month of birth in the even-numbered years for those physicians born in even-numbered years and on the last day of the month of birth in odd-numbered years for those physicians born in odd-numbered years. The biennial renewal fee for this renewal period has been prorated to each physician's birth date. Although all physicians must still renew their licenses prior to February 28, 1978, the amount of their renewal fee and length of time the renewed license is valid depends upon the month and year (odd or even) of each physician’s birth date. License renewal applications will be mailed to physicians at the end of January.

New Licensed Health Care Practitioner Acupuncturist

The Business and Professions Code defines “Acupuncture” as the stimulation of a certain point or points on or near the surface of the body by the insertion of needles to prevent or modify the perception of pain or to normalize physiological functions, including pain control, for the treatment of certain diseases or dysfunctions of the body.

Although the actual practice dates back thousands of years, the licensure category of acupuncturist has been established only recently. Enabling legislation was passed, in California, in 1975 and the first certificates were issued in 1976. As of November, 1977, approximately 590 acupuncturists have been licensed.

Although acupuncturists need not work under the supervision of physicians and surgeons, the law allows them to perform acupuncture only upon “a prior diagnosis or referral from a licensed physician and surgeon, dentist, podiatrist, or chiropractor”. The referral need only be for acupuncture and need not be to a specific practitioner. The acupuncture performed must be appropriate to the diagnosis. The Acupuncturist is required by law to report to the referring or diagnosing practitioner the nature and effect of the treatment.

The Acupuncture Advisory Committee and the Division of Allied Health Professions have received many complaints from certified acupuncturists regarding the refusal of physicians to cooperate in the referral process even though a referral may have been requested by the patient. The Board of Medical Quality Assurance requests that all physicians and surgeons be responsive to patient requests for referral for acupuncture.

Further information regarding the legal status of the practice of acupuncture can be obtained by calling the Division of Allied Health Professions at (916) 920-6373.

Medi-Cal Reimbursements

Some physicians and surgeons have reported that certain drugs or treatment modalities which may be drugs or treatments of choice are not those which will be reimbursed under the Medi-Cal program. An example cited is that Medi-Cal will reimburse for the use of saline but not for progesterinidin for second trimester abortions although the latter drug is recommended by official Ob/Gyn bodies.

Questions regarding which drugs or treatment modalities are authorized and payable under the Medi-Cal program can be directed, along with suggestions, criticisms, or complaints, to Medi-Cal Field Offices in San Francisco by calling toll-free (800) 792-0880 or calling collect (213) 620-5980 in Los Angeles.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

6/1/77-10/26/77

Sundquist, Ludwig, M.D. — Baldwin Park
236(a), 292. Violation of Probation & B & P Code
Violation of conditions or probation dated November 29, 1977, aiding and abetting unlicensed practice of medicine.
Revoked.

Orecek, Pat M., M.D. — Brea
2417
Mental illness to such an extent as to affect his ability to conduct with safety the practice of medicine.
Revoked.
October 26, 1977.

Lund, Douglas, M.D. — Pollock Pines
2399 B & P Code
Prescribing drugs without a good faith prior examination or medical indication.
Revoked, stayed, 10 years probation with terms and conditions.

Allison, Murray, R.P.T — San Diego
2660(j), 2670, B & P Code
Violation of the Medical Practice Act, diagnosing for disease.
Suspension for 180 days, stayed 90 days, 3 years probation with terms and conditions.

Birnbaum, Milton, M.D. — Los Angeles
236(b), 236(a), 2381 B & P Code
Commission of an act involving dishonesty and moral turpitude, conviction of criminal conspiracy to cheat and defraud Medi-Cal.
Revoked, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.
September 14, 1977.

Gilbert, Beatrice, M.D. — Denver, Colorado
236(b), 236(h), B & P Code
Gross negligence and incompetence in administering anesthesia to patients which resulted in one patient’s death.
Order of Dismissal, surrender of license.
October 14, 1977.
Schwartzman, Leonard, M.D. - Los Angeles
2390, 2411, 2361(e), B & P Code
Self-administration of drugs.
Suspended one year, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.

Thomas, Claude R., M.D. - Corning
2361(e), 2383, 2384, 2391.5, 490 B & P Code
Commission of an act involving moral turpitude, conviction of a felony, violation of statutes regulating controlled drugs, prescribing drugs without a good faith prior examination or medical indication, violation of statutes regulating controlled drugs.
Revoke, stayed, 2 years probation with terms and conditions.
June 17, 1977.

Brown, Donald C., M.D. - West Covina
2361(e), 2390, 2391.5, B & P Code
Conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude, felony hit and run while under the influence of alcohol.
Revoke, stayed, 10 years probation with terms and conditions.

Hagan, Richard E., M.D. - Lang Beach
2361(e), B & P Code
Commission of an act involving moral turpitude, engaged in willful misconduct.
Revoke, stayed, 3 years probation with terms and conditions.

Watt, John L., M.D. - West Covina
2390, 2391.5, B & P Code
Self-administration of drugs, violation of statutes regulating controlled drugs.
Revoke, stayed, 9 months suspension, 10 years probation with terms and conditions.

Zachary, Lloyd, M.D. - Yuba City
2361(e), 2372, B & P Code
Submitting false claims for reimbursement under the California Medical Assistance Program for physician's services not rendered by a physician.
Suspended 180 days, stayed, 3 years probation with terms and conditions.

Winter, Bruce V., M.D. - Chicago, Illinois
2390, 2391.5, B & P Code
Violation of Probation.
Revoked.

Goldstein, Morris, M.D. - Beverly Hills
2390, 2391.5, B & P Code
Conviction of violation of statutes regulating controlled drugs, prescribing drugs without a good faith prior examination or medical indication.
Revoke, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.
July 26, 1977.

Bell, Glen Dale, D.P.M. - Walnut Creek
2361(e), 2391, 2392, B & P Code
Self-administration of podiatric medicine, violation of Welfare and Institutions Code by falsely certifying he had performed services when in fact he did not, the services were performed by an unlicensed individual.
Revoke, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.

Turner, Charles W., M.D. - Newport Beach
2361(e), 2390, 490, B & P Code
Conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude, violation of statutes regulating controlled drugs, prescribing drugs without a good faith prior examination or medical indication.
Suspended 1 year, stayed, actual suspension for 45 days, 3 years probation with terms and conditions.

Rogers, Maurice B., M.D. - Los Angeles
2390, 2391.5, B & P Code
Conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude, violation of statutes regulating controlled drugs, violation of welfare and institutions code by falsely certifying he had performed services when in fact he did not, the services were performed by an unlicensed individual.
Revoke, stayed, 10 years probation with terms and conditions.

Tennant, Thomas, M.D. - Santa Barbara
2361(e), 2391, 2390, 2391.5, B & P Code
Conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude, violation of statutes regulating controlled drugs, violation of welfare and institutions code by falsely certifying he had performed services when in fact he did not, the services were performed by an unlicensed individual.
Revoke, stayed, 10 years probation with terms and conditions.

Brown, Donald C., M.D. - West Covina
2361(e), 2390, 2391.5, B & P Code
Conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude, felony hit and run while under the influence of alcohol.
Revoke, stayed, 10 years probation with terms and conditions.
September 14, 1977.

Chun, Richard M., M.D. - Roseville
2361(e), B & P Code
Self-administration of drugs, writing false prescriptions to obtain drugs, violating statutes regulating controlled drugs.
Revoke, stayed, 10 years probation with terms and conditions.
September 14, 1977.

Dow, Warren, M.D. - San Pedro
2361(e), B & P Code
Commission of an act involving dishonesty, violation of welfare and institutions code, gross negligence and incompetence, failure to report to local public health authorities a suspected case of an infectious disease in a known food handler.
Suspended one year, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.

Doyne, Marlin, M.D. - Los Angeles
2361(e), B & P Code
Commission of an act involving dishonesty, violating welfare and institutions code, gross negligence and incompetence, failure to report to local public health authorities a suspected case of an infectious disease in a known food handler.
Suspended one year, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.

Praski, George M.D. - Costa Mesa
2390, 2391.5, B & P Code
Self-administration of drugs, violation of statutes regulating controlled drugs.
Revoke, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.

Tepper, David J., M.D. - Oakland
2361(e), B & P Code
Gross negligence and incompetence, engaging in willful misconduct.
Suspended one year, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.

Mandell, Steven D.P.M. - Carthage
2390, 2391.5, 2361(e), 2399.5 B & P Code
Prescribing drugs without a good faith prior examination or medical indication, commission of acts involving moral turpitude, dishonesty and corruption, obtaining drugs with false prescriptions.
Revoke, stayed, 10 years probation with terms and conditions.

Rachels, Andre W., M.D. - Los Angeles
2372, 2390, B & P Code
Self-administration of drugs.
Revoke, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.

Demery, Leroy, M.D. - Los Angeles
2390, 2391.5, 2399.5 B & P Code
Prescribing drugs without a good faith prior examination or medical indication.
Revoke, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.

Mills, Roger, M.D. - San Jose
2361(e), B & P Code
Violation of probation.
Revoke, stayed, 5 years probation with terms and conditions.
September 14, 1977.
Clarification and correction to prior Action Report (December 1976) concerning:

56787-65612-7748M CS OSP
Judgment overturned the Division of Medical Quality’s decision revoking Dr. Testa’s license for violation of Sections 3, March 1977. Dr. Testa’s license has been reinstated.

On July 29, 1977, the Los Angeles Superior Court ordered the reinstatement of Dr. Filmore Testa’s medical license. This judgment overturned the Division of Medical Quality’s decision revoking Dr. Testa’s license for violation of Sections 2361, 2391.5, and 4211 (a) (c) (k) of the Business and Professions Code. This decision was published in Action Report No. 3, March 1977. Dr. Testa’s license has been reinstated.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the October 1977 meeting, the Board elected the following officers:

Florence Stroud, R.N., of Berkeley, is President of the Board of Medical Quality Assurance. Division Presidents are: Eugene Feldman, M.D., Medical Quality; William Gerber, M.D., Licensing; and Jeffry Gordon, M.D., Allied Health Professions.