

MEDICAL BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE REPORT ISSUED: April 24, 2008
ATTENTION: Medical Errors Task Force
DEPARTMENT: Medical Board of California
SUBJECT: Mission Statement for the Task Force
STAFF CONTACT: Janie Cordray

REQUESTED ACTION:

Adoption of Mission Statement for the Medical Errors Task Force

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff makes suggestions in the “Executive Summary” but makes no recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At the January 31, 2008 meeting of the Task Force, the members discussed the mission of the panel, and adopted the following working statement:

The Board would like to examine its role to determine if it could provide greater public protection by becoming involved in initiatives to reduce medical errors or how it might provide assistance to such.

At that meeting, some members were of the opinion that they needed more information before deciding on a statement, while other were of the opinion that a clear statement should be adopted before beginning their work, and wanted to further refine the statement at a future discussion.

The following were elements that the members stated they would like to promote:

- a statement that would be conducive to creating a culture where providers are inspired to participate to reduce errors, with the goal to minimize discipline and maximize engagement early in the process to find ways to prevent future errors;
- a national, centralized database of the errors;
- a system of responsibility and accountability – working with physicians to improve patient care;
- a system that would promote patient safety;
- simple, identifiable solutions that would assist physicians and protect patients from errors, such as a medical information card or other means of information, such as a cell phone loaded with the information;
- a system that would empower patients, such as greater disclosure of the Board’s existence, as well as patients’ rights and responsibilities.

Staff consulted the Board’s 2007 strategic plan for how it addressed medical errors. The members adopted the following objective:

Create a plan to assist in addressing medical errors as appropriate to the Board’s Mission and resources.

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To take a literalist approach to the strategic plan objective, the problem statement for the task force could be:

- *To create a plan to assist in addressing medical errors as appropriate to the Board's Mission and resources; or,*
- *To assist the Board in the creation of a plan to reduce medical errors as appropriate to the Board's Mission and resources.*

Taking into account the members' discussions at their January 31 meeting, however, it would seem that the following statements might be more in sync with the members' opinions:

- *To examine the Board's role in promoting patient safety, through developing or participating in systems to encourage and assist physicians in identifying and remedying medical errors; or*
- *To examine the Board's role in promoting patient safety by creating a system to encourage learning from mistakes, honest acknowledgement and accountability of medical errors, and open discourse to find remedies.*

To marry the concepts of the strategic plan and the task force discussions, the following statement might be appropriate:

To examine the Board's role in promoting patient safety, through developing or participating in systems to encourage and assist physicians in identifying and remedying medical errors as appropriate to the Board's Mission and resources.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There is no fiscal impact of the adoption of a mission statement.

PREVIOUS MBC AND/OR COMMITTEE ACTION:

In 2007, the Board adopted the following Mission, Objective and Goals:

Mission:

The Mission of the Medical Board of California is to protect healthcare consumers through proper licensing and regulation of physicians and surgeons and certain allied healthcare professions and through the vigorous, objective enforcement of the Medical Practices Act, and, to promote access to quality medical care through the Board's licensing and regulatory functions.

Goal:

Promote the professional qualifications of medical practitioners by setting requirements for education, experience, and examinations, taking into account the state's need for more physicians, particularly in underserved populations; and promoting physician wellness.

Objective:

Create a plan to assist in addressing medical errors as appropriate to the Board's Mission and resources.

At the January 31, 2008 meeting of the Medical Errors Task Force, the members adopted the following working mission statement:

The Board would like to examine its role to determine if it could provide greater public protection by becoming involved in initiatives to reduce medical errors or how it might provide assistance to such.