



**AGENDA ITEM 7D**

**Date:** July 13, 2007

**To:** Members, Medical Board of California

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Thornton".

**From:** Dave Thornton  
Executive Director

**Subject:** Federation of State Medical Boards' Request to Distribute Book to All California Physicians and Surgeons

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) Research and Education Foundation, working with Scott Fishman, M.D. a pain management specialist and one of our Expert Reviewers, developed a book titled, *Responsible Opioid Prescribing, A Physician's Guide*. This book was developed "to further advance patient access to appropriate pain care and minimize risks of abuse and diversion." The FSMB hopes to eventually distribute this book to all physicians in the United States.

The FSMB is asking the MBC to agree to distribute this book to its in-state physicians (enclosed is a letter from James N. Thompson, M.D., FSMB President and Chief Executive Officer dated July 1, 2007). As Dr. Thompson explains, the MBC's commitment to participate in this project will assist the FSMB in securing the funding from various sources to provide this book to state medical boards and cover all costs of distribution to their licensees.

I request your approval to distribute this book to all current in-state licensees and new licensees, and to direct staff to work with FSMB to on the funding to cover the cost of distribution.

**Attachments**

July 1, 2007

David Thornton  
Executive Director  
Medical Board of California  
1426 Howe Ave., Ste. 54  
Sacramento, CA 95825-3236

Dear Mr. Thornton:

The Federation of State Medical Boards Research and Education Foundation (the Foundation) has completed the first phase of a special project to educate physicians nationwide about safe and effective pain management practice and to relieve anxiety associated with prescribing opioids.

Over the past several years, state medical boards have adopted policy, rules or regulations reflecting the principles contained in the Federation of State Medical Boards *Model Policy for the Use of Controlled Substances for the Treatment of Pain (2004)*. State pain policies have supported and contributed to improved quality and access to pain care in the U.S. The *Model Policy* represents concise consensus guidelines for safe opioid prescribing but, to date, has not been translated into practical terms for clinical practice. Accordingly, few physicians are familiar with these guidelines, and even fewer utilize them in their practice. To further advance patient access to appropriate pain care and minimize risks of abuse and diversion, the Foundation developed the book, *Responsible Opioid Prescribing, A Physician's Guide*, the first coordinated effort to translate pain policy into clinical practice. Distribution of the book to practicing physicians will significantly support efforts to alleviate confusion among physicians as to their respective obligations to patients in pain and to comply with state and federal regulations; and, address physicians' fear of regulatory scrutiny even when prescribing in appropriate settings, all contributing factors to the undertreatment of pain.

The Foundation initiated this physician education program to promote transparency and pharmacovigilance among physicians who prescribe opioids for pain management. The Foundation will work with individual state medical boards to distribute the book to their licensees. In that regard, the Foundation is securing funding support from a coalition of organizations, foundations, professional societies and industry to provide books to state medical boards for distribution to their licensees and cover all costs associated with such distribution.

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On behalf of the Foundation, I hope that the Medical Board of California will support this project by agreeing to distribute the book to its in-state physicians. The Board's commitment to participate in this project will certainly facilitate and strengthen the ability of the Foundation to solicit and obtain funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James N. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

James N. Thompson, M.D.  
FSMB President and Chief Executive Officer  
Secretary, FSMB Research and Education Foundation

JNT/lar

**JUN 15 2007**

James N. Thompson, M.D.  
President, Chief Executive Officer  
Federation of State Medical Boards  
P. O. Box 619850  
Dallas, Texas 75261-9860

Dear Dr. Thompson:


This letter is in response to correspondence dated May 11, 2007 from Scott M. Fishman, M.D., to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) requesting comment and support concerning the book *Responsible Opioid Prescribing* published by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB). We understand the book is intended to be presented as a physician's guide to providing improved patient care while reducing the diversion of controlled substances used in the treatment of pain.

DEA commends efforts by the FSMB and other medical authorities to establish medical practice guidelines focusing on the proper prescribing of opioids. While opioids can be a vital component of legitimate treatment of pain, the abuse (nonmedical use) of such drugs is a serious and growing health problem in this country. Recent statistics published in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health demonstrate that prescription drugs account for the second most commonly abused category of drugs, behind marijuana and ahead of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and other drugs.

As DEA stated in its September 6, 2006 Policy Statement: Dispensing Controlled Substances for the Treatment of Pain, our agency's role is to ensure that controlled substances are prescribed and dispensed for legitimate medical purposes by practitioners acting in the usual course of professional practice and otherwise in accordance with the Controlled Substances Act and DEA regulations. While it is certainly appropriate for physicians and medical oversight boards to explore the types of questions addressed in medical practice guides such as *Responsible Opioid Prescribing*, it would be beyond DEA's role to endorse such a guidance document. Nonetheless, DEA appreciates that the FSMB is seeking to promote critical discussions within the medical community on this subject and adherence to professional standards regarding the overall practice of medicine.

copy of this book.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph T. Rannazzisi  
Deputy Assistant Administrator  
Office of Diversion Control