

MEDICAL BOARD STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item 16

DATE REPORT ISSUED: October 10, 2007
ATTENTION: Board Members
DEPARTMENT: Medical Board of California (MBC)
SUBJECT: Information Technology Replacement
STAFF CONTACT: Diane Ingram

REQUESTED ACTION:

Board members approve MBC Information Technology replacement to improve interoperability with DOJ's information systems for vertical enforcement as required by SB 231.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends MBC should implement an information technology system which is fully interoperable with the current system used at Department of Justice (DOJ). This will require MBC moving away from the outdated and non-interoperable CAS system which is slowing down MBC business and which is now a high risk software environment for MBC because of the difficulty maintaining a 20 year old system. It is essential that MBC investigators and DOJ use fully interoperable systems for vertical enforcement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A review by MBC staff has shown significant inefficiency and disruption to communication and business processes between MBC and DOJ investigators because of the lack of interoperability of the information systems of the two organizations. DOJ has already upgraded their system and have demonstrated its greatly increased effectiveness and efficiency. It is essential that MBC also replaces its IT system to become fully interoperable with DOJ. Staff concludes that significant benefits to both consumers and licensees will be achieved through this upgrade. Senior management from MBC and DOJ have met and agreed, subject to Board approval, a plan that aligns the information technology systems of the two organizations. MBC staff have met with DCA who have expressed support of this plan. A formal feasibility study to ascertain the scope, costs, timeline and risks of a proposed project to replace CAS is presently underway.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

All costs will be available at the conclusion of the feasibility study but initial estimates for the first year are for a cost of \$1m for technology upgrades, data migration, consulting, training and programming of interfaces. The cost for maintenance and implementation during the second year is estimated at \$500,000 with ongoing costs to be determined.

PREVIOUS MBC AND/OR COMMITTEE ACTION:

Improving the IT system (CAS) currently in use by MBC is an accepted longstanding need. At its July meeting the Board requested staff to investigate the benefits of making this change. Two previous feasibility studies have been conducted which both have concluded that the information technology upgrade should occur, but unfortunately neither was approved by the Department of Finance (oversight agency) for implementation.



ISSUE MEMORANDUM

DATE	October 5, 2007
TO	Kimberly Kirchmeyer Deputy Director
FROM	Diane Ingram Medical Board of California
SUBJECT	Vertical Enforcement Communication

The Medical Board's investigators and the Department of Justice's Deputy Attorneys General cannot communicate effectively due to having two separate information technology systems in use for vertical enforcement.

BACKGROUND

The mission of the Medical Board of California (Board) is to protect healthcare consumers through the proper licensing and regulation of physicians and surgeons and certain allied healthcare professions and through the vigorous, objective enforcement of the Medical Practice Act.

On January 1, 2006, Government Code Sections 12529, 12529.5 and 12529.6 went into effect, requiring the Board investigators to work with the Department of Justice, Health Quality Enforcement Section (HQES), Deputy Attorneys General (DAG), from the start of all investigations in a "vertical prosecution model" through to closure, or if warranted, prosecution of the case. Vertical prosecution is based on the team concept with the investigator and attorney working together to achieve the common goal of greater public protection for the people of California. The Board and the HQES have worked closely together to implement the vertical enforcement model.

The Board's Central Complaint Unit reviews complaints at headquarters and then when investigation is appropriate, refers the complaint to the field office for investigation. The HQES has a DAG assigned to work in each Medical Board field office along side the investigators. The investigation of a complaint referred to the field office is assigned to both an investigator and a DAG at the same time.

The DAG has desktop computers set up at the field office. The DAGs working on Board cases use a separate network and an information technology system by Thomson Elite called ProLaw. The ProLaw system uses a dashboard to provide one-touch access to everything the DAG needs including their daily calendar, reminders, matters (or events),

contacts, documents, and more. ProLaw automates case management, tasks, deadlines, calendars, document management, reporting, time entry, and also provides comprehensive integration with Outlook, Word and Westlaw research and court rules. When a DAG creates a matter, ProLaw automates creation of file folders and organizes all subsequent documents and supporting materials within that matter. The events, docketing, and deadlines are integrated into ProLaw matter information into Outlook calendar. Complaints are logged in as "matters" into ProLaw as the tracking mechanism.

The investigator working on Medical Board cases uses WordPerfect 12, GroupWise email, the mainframe application Consumer Affairs Systems (CAS) Enforcement module, and the Investigator Activity Reporting (IAR) systems. There are additional enforcement databases used also by enforcement including Malpractice, 805, CCU Log, Medical Expert, Exhibits Log, and Criminal Activity Report. These databases perform additional tracking functions not available in the mainframe CAS.

The investigator uses a template form created in WordPerfect for the essential elements required from the DAG on a case. As an investigation progresses the updated documents are emailed to the DAG. Case numbers are used as the tracking mechanism for the investigation. Most communication on the investigations is performed with email for documentation along with updated case reports.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The investigator and the DAG use different tools while working together in vertical enforcement. They additionally use different terminology for tracking and working on a investigation/matter. The multitude of applications used by the investigator is cumbersome and delays the investigation. The terminology differences used by both parties also impacts the communication while working thru the investigation to prosecution. The systems do not share the same structure or components and do not have the capacity to share information across platforms as they exist today.

The CAS is a natural program running on a Adabas database and the technical support for the system has traditionally had to go thru the Department of Consumer Affairs, Office of Information Services for completion. Additionally, as the years go by and technology evolves, programmers are getting harder and harder to find and contracting out for services is often necessary to complete enhancements. Currently the Board has only one qualified natural/Adabas programmer on staff.

To improve vertical enforcement the Board investigators needs to have a comprehensive all in one application available to them with similar tracking mechanisms and terminology used in the ProLaw application.

CONS

To move forward with an all in one comprehensive system will require the purchase of the one time off the shelf application ProLaw, three new servers, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft Advanced Server, Cognos Reporting tool, and consultants to install for the Board. The ProLaw application would require several additional enhancements to

incorporate all of the components needed to make it an all in one application for the Board. Training and documentation will be absolutely necessary for all enforcement staff to use the system. Additionally, conversion of all complaints and current databases would be required and long term support by Department of Technology Services hosting the servers and ongoing yearly maintenance for the applications. These are unknown costs at this time.

PROS

Moving to ProLaw will allow the Board and the Department of Justice to work more efficiently at vertical enforcement. Sharing one terminology and the same system will improve work productivity by both agencies.