MEDICAL BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE REPORT ISSUED: January 24, 2025
ATTENTION: Members, Medical Board of California
SUBJECT: Information Systems Branch Summary
STAFF CONTACT: Sean Eichelkraut, Information Technology Manager II

<u>Requested Action</u>:

This report is intended to provide the Members with an update on the Information Systems Branch (ISB) at the Medical Board of California (Board). No action is needed at this time.

<u>Staffing Updates:</u>

- The IBM COGNOS/SQL Developer Information Technology Specialist I position became vacant after the prior employee retired on December 30, 2024. While recruiting for a replacement continues, we are working with the Department of Consumer Affairs on a Retired Annuitant position to bring back the prior employee to help fill the immediate needs and eventually cross train the new incumbent.

This brings the total number of vacancies to six within the Information Systems Branch. Recruitment efforts are ongoing for the five positions currently approved to be refilled. Two candidates for Help Desk vacancies are currently in background checks.

<u>Infrastructure Updates:</u>

- Replacement of all network switches in all Board and Health Quality Investigation Unit (HQIU) offices is underway and will be an ongoing project through the first half of 2025.
- As part of the network switch replacement, a network redesign is also underway to conform to modern best practices for security.

<u>Medical Board of California iOS App Update for iOS 17</u>:

Originally launched in July 2018, the Medical Board of California iOS App is getting some updates to keep up with Apple's ongoing enhancements to the iOS operating system. Failing to conform to Apple's standards for operating system updates could result in the app being removed from the Apple Store for consumers to obtain, so these updates are being made proactively to mitigate that risk. While updating the project, push notifications are being implemented to keep the app updating even when the application is no longer running in the background. Originally, push notifications were deemed out of scope, as an original requirement was to not track any user information. Feedback about the app has suggested that users are willing to opt into some

obfuscated level of tracking to incorporate this push notification functionality. Usage will be tracked by non-identifying device IDs and no personal information about users will be tracked.

February 2025 Update: Testing is still in progress for the iOS application refresh. Some issues with the user interface were identified during testing that warranted changing how the background sync process happens, so the user interface is not impacted. Release is now planned for second quarter of 2025.

Complaint Tracking System Update:

February 2025 Update: Programming resources for the Complaint Tracking System development are still being shared with the iOS App update project, but development work is proceeding. The infrastructure services to authenticate the patient/authorized representative for access and extract complaint information from Breeze have been completed. Next steps will be building the user interface, integrating it into the Board's standard website templates, and translating the data into pre-configured descriptive meanings to better explain the activities to users. Once the user interface is baselined, the project will switch focus from development to testing where more legal and enforcement resources will be required. Additional updates will be provided at the May 2025 meeting and we hope to share an early build preview at the August 2025 meeting.

Direct Online Certification Submission (DOCS) Update:

The Direct Online Certification Submission (DOCS) service is a secure, fast, and reliable online document delivery system that allows medical schools and postgraduate training programs to submit certain primary-source licensing documents to the Board.

February 2025 Update: Enhancements to the DOCS portal were deployed on January 7, 2025, to allow postgraduate training program users to upload Form ILR, Initial License Renewal Verification of ACGME/RCPSC/CFPC/CODA Postgraduate Training, to the Board on behalf of licensees in a manner very similar to how they have been able to upload documents for applicants. Adding licensees to the scope of DOCS will allow additional document types to be added for licensees in the future, furthering the objective of reducing the dependency on paper and obtaining requirements electronically. Statistics for licensing documents for the first quarter of 2025 will be available at the next meeting.

As of January 1, 2025, 1,186 (+50) Medical School Users representing 697 (+19) Medical Schools world-wide and 5,308 (+273) Postgraduate Training Program Users representing 6,168 (+247) Postgraduate Training Programs at 880 (+24) Facilities are currently registered in DOCS.

More than 118,164 (+3,742) documents have been uploaded for 27,693 (+628) applicants since launching the platform.

Applicant Documents Uploaded by Month
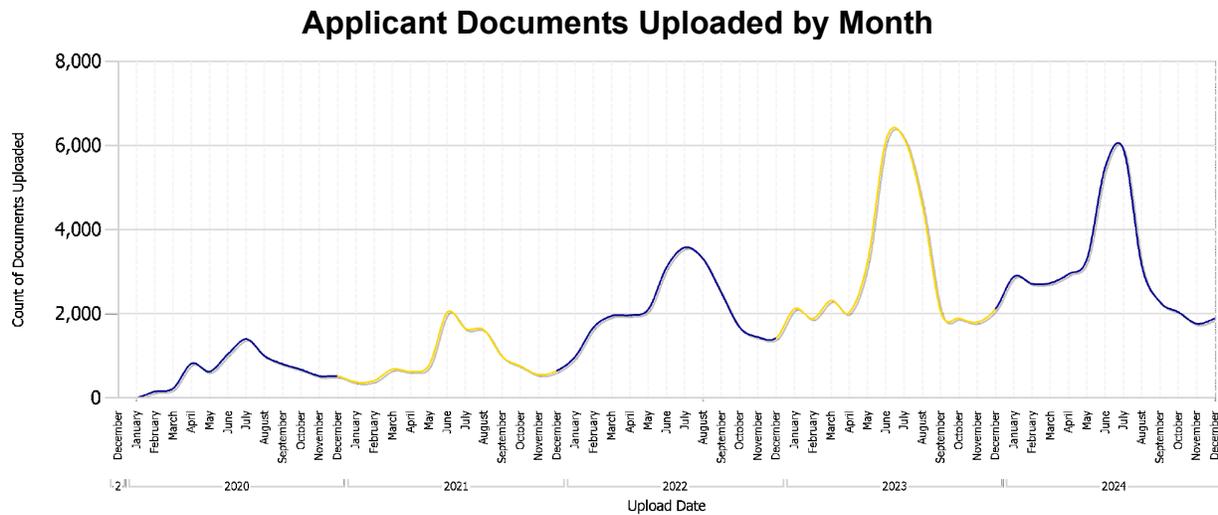
Volunteer Physician Registry Update:

The Volunteer Physician Registry (VPR) is intended to be used by clinics or other entities seeking volunteer physicians. Physicians in the registry have provided information about areas where they would be willing to volunteer and have provided details regarding their area of practice and foreign language proficiency. Originally implemented in 2006 and most recently refreshed in December 2018, the web application was due for cosmetic and technological improvements to ensure compliance with State of California and accessibility standards. For security and support considerations, the existing volunteer accounts will be migrated to the new system, but license authentication will be performed using the IDEAL (Interoperability Development Effort to Authenticate Licensees) interface.

February 2025 Update: Updates to the VPR web application were deployed on December 6, 2024. All existing volunteer accounts were migrated into the new system as part of the deployment. Since launching the updated web application, 228 new licensees (1,495 registered) have accessed the registry and the active volunteer count has increased by 111 (900 active). The Public Information Office is going to start an informational campaign about the registry in newsletters and social media to increase awareness. Future updates will be for trending registered versus active numbers only.
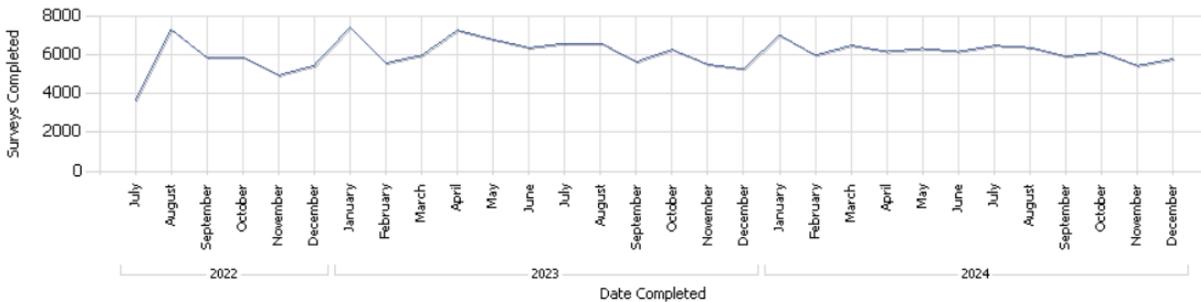
HCAI Survey Update:

AB 133 authorizes the California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), formally the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD), to collect additional workforce data from healing arts boards through California Business and Professions Code 502 effective July 1, 2022. Additional data collection items include: Anticipated year of retirement, physical address of primary and secondary practice locations and types, date of birth, gender identity, National Provider Identifier (NPI), work hours, sexual orientation, and disability status.

February 2025 Update: Effective January 1, 2025, Assembly Bill 1991 made it mandatory for a licensee with a National Provider Identifier (NPI) to provide that information as part of the survey. Enhancements were deployed to the web application to remove the "Decline to Disclose" response from this survey question. If a licensee does not possess an NPI, they can answer "No" to the question, but a "Yes" requires the NPI to be entered.

Over 182,285 (+11,213) surveys have been completed, representing just over 81.27% (+0.72%) of the Renewed and Current Physician and Surgeon population.

HCAI Surveys Completed Per Month

**HCAI Survey Response Rate for Current Licensing Population**

Survey Completed
132,072
81.27%

No Survey
30,441
18.73%
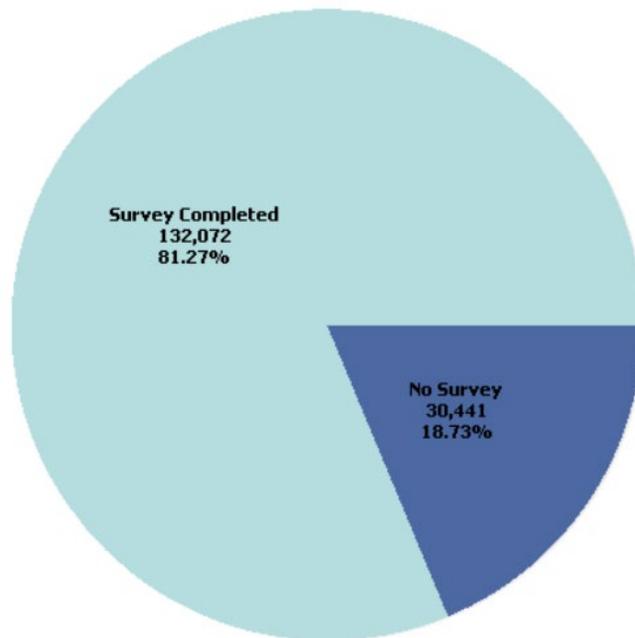
"Print Yourself" Wallet License with QR Codes Update:

Allowing licensees to print their own Wallet License Cards saves the Board resources in the generating, printing, and mailing of the plastic cards, which are not as common or useful as they once were. Licensees are able to forward the PDF version of their Wallet

License to their employers and others as needed and are instantly available instead of the 4-6 weeks it previously took for plastic cards to reach licensees. QR Codes allow anyone to scan the license to instantly view the licensee's up to date DCA Search profile.

February 2025 Update: 205,256 (+11,513) Wallet Licenses have been generated.

Wallet Cards Generated Per Month
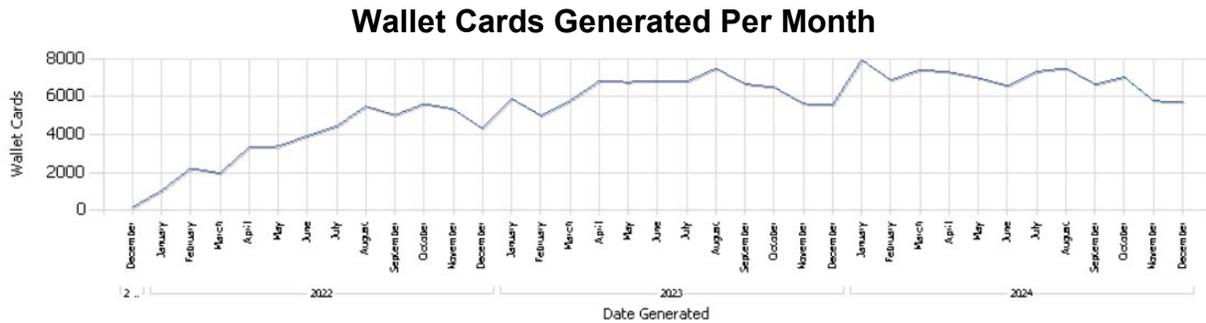
BreEZe Online Complaint Form Redesign Update:

The Information Systems Branch (ISB) Breeze Business Integration team is working with the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Office of Information Services (OIS) BreEZe team to implement the recent changes made to the Board's hard copy Complaint Form to the BreEZe Online Complaint Form. The goal of these updates is to streamline the forms to attempt to collect as much relevant data and medical releases as possible in the early stages of the complaint submission process. The paper form updates have led to an increase in initially required information and releases being provided with complaints submitted in hard copy. On May 5, 2021, the BreEZe Online Complaint Form was updated to warn individuals who submit a complaint anonymously, that if the Board is unable to obtain documentation or evidence of the complaint allegations, the complaint may not be able to be pursued and it will not be possible to provide updates regarding the complaint. The goal is to encourage complainants to provide their contact information so additional communication can occur if necessary. Additional enhancements are still in the development stages as the Board works with OIS to continue to improve BreEZe. ISB is currently working with the vendor on changing some of the BreEZe screens core functionality to make the process more user friendly for complainants.

February 2025 Update: The code release from the vendor is now expected in March 2025 (originally planned for October 2024) due to tasks regarding unrelated, high priority security enhancements and potential changes relating to Los Angeles fires. Once the code is released, the Board will be the pilot for configuring this enhanced functionality for our BreEZe online complaint form submission. The estimate for release of the Board's enhanced online complaint form is now the second half of 2025.

BreEZe Electronic Only Renewal Notice Project:

The Information Systems Branch (ISB) Breeze Business Integration team is working with the MBC Executive and Licensing leadership on a project to phase out initial paper license renewals to achieve mandated budget reductions and increase efficiency. The current plan calls for replacing the multiple page paper renewal packet, mailed to all licensees if they have not renewed by 120 days prior to the expiration date, with a single page letter notifying licensees that their license is ready for renewal and future notices will only be sent via email. It will also reenforce the importance of licensees keeping their email address up to date with the Board as required by law. Licensees are currently notified 180 days prior to their license expiration and if they successfully renew before the 120-day milestone, they do not receive any additional paper notices.

February 2025 Update: Informational charts and tables below show how we have been tracking renewal methods and timeframes. We will continue to track and report these metrics while assisting licensing in converting to email only renewal notices. For the 2024 baseline, 85+% of renewals are performed online and approximately 50% of those online renewals are completed more than 120 days prior to the expiration date.

Renewal Method Percentage - 2024
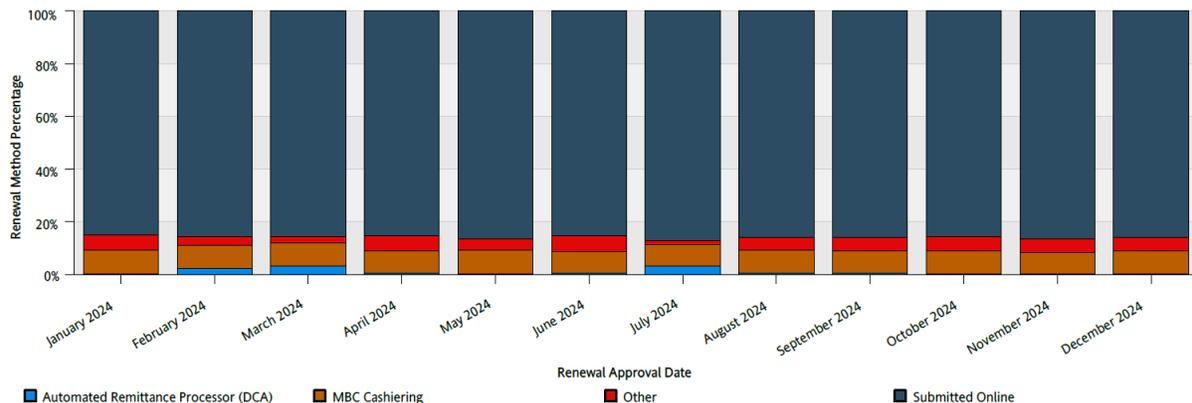
Renewal Method Percentage	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	Average
Automated Remittance Processor (DCA)	0.25%	2.35%	3.32%	0.37%	0.21%	0.44%	3.19%	0.57%	0.40%	0.08%	0.04%	0.33%	0.96%
MBC Cashiering	8.97%	8.63%	8.69%	8.63%	9.08%	8.24%	8.16%	8.60%	8.52%	8.89%	8.23%	8.63%	8.61%
Other	5.78%	3.52%	2.47%	5.59%	4.19%	5.93%	1.57%	4.78%	5.05%	5.38%	5.31%	5.00%	4.55%
Submitted Online	85.00%	85.50%	85.52%	85.42%	86.52%	85.39%	87.07%	86.06%	86.03%	85.65%	86.42%	86.05%	85.89%

Online Renewal Timeframes
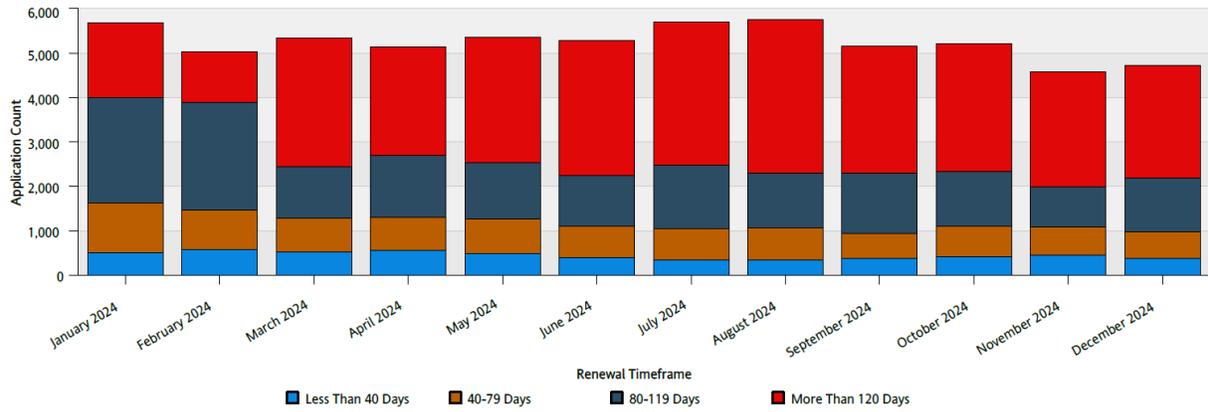
Application Count	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	Total
Less Than 40 Days	511	572	517	566	490	404	334	349	371	420	442	371	5,347
40-79 Days	1,125	901	761	743	781	705	721	726	573	689	638	608	8,971
80-119 Days	2,360	2,415	1,165	1,380	1,265	1,140	1,415	1,228	1,346	1,220	917	1,210	17,061
More Than 120 Days	1,692	1,143	2,889	2,459	2,817	3,034	3,236	3,461	2,871	2,875	2,580	2,530	31,587
Total	5,688	5,031	5,332	5,148	5,353	5,283	5,706	5,764	5,161	5,204	4,577	4,719	62,966