MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OVERVIEW OF
THE CURRENT REGULATORY PROGRAM
As of November 2026

Section 6 – Online Practice Issues

56. Discuss the prevalence of online practice and whether there are issues with unlicensed activity.

- How does the board regulate online/internet practice?

The Medical Board of California (Board) regulates online and internet-based medical practice in the same manner as traditional in-person practice: through enforcement of the Medical Practice Act, licensure requirements, mandatory reporting laws, and investigation of complaints, including those arising from telemedicine, online prescribing, and internet-based business models.

In the Central Complaint Unit (CCU), the Board continues to receive complaints involving medical practices utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI), often connected to telemedicine, online prescribing, and internet driven business models. Barring certain statutory exceptions, existing law prohibits the unlicensed practice of medicine, including the corporate practice of medicine, under Business and Professions Code section 2052 and 2400, et seq., and the Board provides guidance on its website and through its newsletters to help physicians identify activities that are prohibited.

- How does the board regulate online/internet business practices outside of California?

The Board regulates telemedicine and other forms of online practice in the same way it regulates regular, in-person medical visits. Telemedicine is a tool within the practice of medicine and does not change the standard of care. This approach also applies when a physician located outside California provides online medical services to a patient located in California. The California Medical Practice Act applies to physicians located outside of California in their care of California patients.

- Does the board need statutory authority or statutory clarification to more effectively regulate online practice, if applicable?

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The Board does not require additional statutory authority or clarification to regulate online or internet based medical practice. Existing provisions of the Medical Practice Act already apply fully to telemedicine, online prescribing, remote care, and internet-facilitated medical services. These statutes allow the Board to investigate complaints, address unlicensed practice, enforce standards of care, and take disciplinary action when services are provided to California patients through online platforms.

However, as AI-supported medical practice becomes more prevalent, the Board may wish to explore whether further statutory clarification is necessary to protect consumers.

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