

MEDICAL BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE REPORT ISSUED: February 4, 2021
 ATTENTION: Members, Medical Board of California
 SUBJECT: Discussion and Possible Action on Amendments to Existing Law that Foster Efficiency with License Application and Renewal Processes
 STAFF CONTACT: Reji Varghese, Deputy Director

REQUESTED ACTION:

This report is intended to provide the Members of the Medical Board of California (Board) with an update on ongoing process improvements and cost reduction activities and request the Board to direct staff to explore changes to the Business and Professions Code (BPC) to modernize the licensing process.

Current Process Improvement Highlights

In November 2020, Board staff identified various cost reduction/process improvement ideas in their respective units. Responses were classified into three categories:

Category 1 = Achievable within 12 months

Category 2 = Achievable within 2 years

Category 3 = Could take more than 2 years to complete and/or require Law/Regulations change.

Completed Category 1 Items

- Stop burning DVDs and overnight mailings of case materials to Attorney General's Office (AGO); AGO to access secure online portal for the materials
- Electronic transmission of AGO letters instead of overnight mailings
- Conduct investigation interviews and probation visits online wherever feasible during COVID-19 lockdown; as appropriate, online visits will occur following the end of the state of emergency
- Eliminate unnecessary printing of documents
- Allow teleworking staff to take licensure application files home and return upon process completion, thereby eliminating the time and expense to scan, print, and copy files and documents
- Consolidate printers, scanners, and related service contracts
- Increase use of SharePoint site to reduce printing costs
- Reduce the number of in-person meetings and use WebEx, Teams, and related services
- Stop copying and distributing mail, instead scan and forward to staff
- Eliminate printed/mailed version of the Winter issue of the Board's newsletter
- Evaluate software licenses and only renew licenses for active users

Other projects pending completion include the creation of “Electronic Wallet Cards” that will replace expensive procurement, printing, and mailing costs related to plastic wallet cards and instituting digital signature technology on certain Board forms.

Board Goals Adopted in Strategic Plan 2018-2021

- Goal 1.1: Examine the ability to automate the licensing process to eliminate the potential for loss of documentation and to streamline the licensing process.
- Goal 1.3: Increase online license renewal to improve efficiency and resources.

Current License Renewal Process

1. Approximately 180 days prior to expiration date: licensees with an email on file with the Board are emailed notifying them that they may renew online
2. Approximately 120 days prior to expiration date: licensees who have not completed their renewal will be mailed a paper renewal notice (as required by BPC section 163.5¹)
3. The board shall notify in writing either by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by electronic mail, if requested by the licensee, any physician and surgeon who does not renew his or her license within 60 days from its date of expiration. (as required by BPC section 2424²)

The vast majority (about 82 percent) of the Board’s physician licensees renew online. Licensees who renew via paper, however, face additional delays as staff wait for documentation and checks to be delivered, which then must be keyed in by hand manually.

Eliminating or modifying the indicated requirements that paper mailings be sent at specified times would help the Board achieve the strategic goals noted above. Staff hope the Board will one day have an entirely online licensure process, with paper-based initial licensure and renewal application documents being sent to applicants and licensees only upon request.

Staff Recommendation

Direct staff to work with the Legislature and stakeholders to explore statutory changes that would reduce the use of paper in the initial licensure and renewal processes and report back at a future meeting.

¹ [BPC section 163.5](#)

² [BPC section 2424](#)