

Transcript of Podcast #3 – Upcoming Postgraduate Training Changes for Licensure

Female voice over music: The Medical Board of California is committed to consumer protection through the licensing and regulation of doctors and certain allied health care professionals.

Carlos Villatoro: My name is Carlos Villatoro and this is Medical Board Chat, the official podcast of the Medical Board of California. The passing of SB 798 brought some significant changes to the board's licensing program. Here to talk about those changes is the board's chief of licensing, April Alameda. April, welcome to Medical Board Chat.

April Alameda: Thank you.

CV: April, what are the new training requirements for persons applying for a medical license in California and when will the changes take effect?

AA: The changes will take effect January 1st of 2020 and the changes are that 36 months of accredited postgraduate training for all applicants are required, regardless of whether the medical school attended was domestic or international. Approved training is either through the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, or the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

CV: This is a big change for the training requirements. Can you tell us what prompted them?

AA: The Medical Board's ultimate goal is to ensure consumer protection, so that is ultimately the reason for the changes. The Board had determined that one year of postgraduate training was insufficient to promote consumer protection.

CV: So how did the Board determine that three years was sufficient to promote consumer protection?

AA: The Board increased the current one or two years to three years for a few reasons. This provides a longer period of time for practicing while under supervision. It is also the minimum number of years of postgraduate training required for any of the ACGME accredited postgraduate training programs and it is also the minimum years of required to be ABMS certified. It also places the same requirements on our international and domestic medical school graduates.

CV: So it puts them on an even playing field then?

AA: Yes, it does.

CV: So what is the scoop on the postgraduate training license otherwise known as the PTL? Who is going to be required to obtain a PTL and at what point will they be required to have it?

AA: So, as stated earlier, this change is effective January 1 of 2020. And any resident that is participating in a California ACGME-accredited program will be required to have a postgraduate training license. They will have to obtain that training license within 180 days of starting the program.

CV: What will the PTL allow its holder to do?

AA: Essentially, a training license allows a resident to practice medicine while in an approved program and under the scope of their training. It also allows a resident to moonlight as long as they have written approval from their program director.

CV: Do trainees need to renew the PTL?

AA: No. Renewal is not required. However, the Board must be notified by the program director of any changes in the status of their residents. For example, if the trainee moves, transfers to another program, terminates, resigns, or takes any leave of absence.

CV: I see. And so are there any circumstances that can change how long a postgraduate training license is valid?

AA: Yes. There is.

CV: And so what are some of those circumstances?

AA: Well, if an applicant completes an ACGME-accredited internship or transitional year out of state and applies for a postgraduate training license, the validity of the training license will be adjusted based on the amount of credit granted. It may also be adjusted for program status changes such as leave of absence.

CV: Let's talk a little bit about the postgraduate training authorization letter. What will happen to that requirement for international medical school graduates to obtain that PTAL before training in the United States?

AA: Well, the Board is actually no longer issuing a PTAL. International medical school graduates will also be required to have a postgraduate training license if participating in an ACGME program in California.

CV: Oh, I see. So I can tell you, April, that one of the most popular features of the Board's website is the ability to check up on your doctor's license. Will people also be able to check up on the PTL of a trainee?

AA: Yes. This will be available on our website. The holder's name and where they're training at will be displayed on our website.

CV: And how will the training requirements affect medical graduates who have already begun their training in California prior to the new changes taking into effect?

AA: Well, any resident that is participating in a California program prior to the new changes will be required to obtain the training license issued by the Board by June 30th of 2020 to be able to continue in that program.

CV: I see. And what is the Board's advice to the program directors of the various residency programs throughout the state? What should they be doing to help facilitate the change in the training requirements?

AA: I think it's very important that the program directors know the details of the law, that they ensure that the residents that are in their program obtained the required training license by the June 30th, 2020 deadline. I think that they need to communicate any questions or concerns that they have with the Board, and also allow sufficient time to address any of these concerns, so the sooner that they reach out to the Board, the better. I also think it's important to periodically check our website for any updates.

CV: Well Okay. So where can someone -- so I assume that the website will have updated information regarding the training requirements. Where can someone get more information regarding the changes?

AA: Well, within the next few months, this information will be on the board's website, so I recommend periodically checking our website. Inquiries also can be emailed to the Board. Our email address is: webmaster@mbc.ca.gov. Emails are responded to within one business day. That's a great way to communicate with the Board.

CV: Excellent. And we also have social media channels that we will be using for a lot of the messaging regarding the changes as well. So is there anything else that I didn't ask you that you feel would be important for the listeners of Medical Board Chat to know?

AA: I would just like to add that the Board has worked diligently over the last year to look at our internal processes, identify what changes that we need to make. We have sent out a letter to all of the programs informing them of this change. And over the next year, a lot of this information will be available on our website. There's outreach opportunities. If there's programs that want us to come out and visit their program to talk about these changes, that is also something that we can do.

CV: Oh that's great.

AA: Yeah and we will also -- our applications -- the revised applications -- will be available 90 days prior to January 1st, 2020. For those that would like to get the process started, they can download the application and start submitting those to the Board. I think, most importantly, I think everyone needs to know that the Board will be communicating with all of our applicants in the middle of next year just to let them know the status of their file and what they need to do.

CV: Oh excellent. And that's gonna do it for Medical Board Chat. Don't forget to follow us on Twitter, like us on Facebook, and download our iOS app for Apple devices. Protecting consumers by advancing high quality safe medical care -- thank you, April.

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AA: Thank you.

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