The Consumer View: State Medical Boards

Citizen Advocacy Center Meeting – Washington, DC
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IPI Mission & Objectives

• **Mission**
  – To ensure the public availability and use of actionable information about health care quality, patient safety and affordability

• **Objectives**
  – To educate the public about health care quality, patient safety, health care costs and patient rights and responsibilities
  – To facilitate access to credible information about health care organizations and professionals
  – To advocate for more, and more useful, health care quality information
Medical Board Roundtable (MBR)

- Started 2015
- National coalition of patient and consumer advocates interested in increasing public awareness and responsiveness of state medical boards to patients, families and the public
- Committee of Patient Safety Action Network (PSAN)
- 30 participants/17 states
- Expertise of Members:
  - Retired State Medical Board Staff
  - Public Members of Health Boards
  - Former Federal Employees (DHHS-OIG; HRSA-NPDB)
  - National/State Consumer Advocates
  - Harmed Patient/Family Members
MBR Activities

• Meet monthly
• Monitor state boards (attend meetings, review websites)
• Share information (articles, reports)
• Invite speakers
• Publicly comment on policy issues (letters, Op-Eds)
• Monitor/involved with state legislation/regulation
• Conduct larger projects
• Expertise in Natl.Practitioner Data Bank public use files
Ten Things Medical Boards Should Do To Be More Publicly Accessible

• **Better Understand How to Reach the Public**
  – Research public perceptions
  – Create Consumer Advisory Boards

• **Community Outreach and Awareness**
  – Post information in Dr. offices about medical boards
  – Speakers bureau
  – Subscriptions to online information
  – Use social media
Ten Things (cont.)

• **Increase Access to Public Meetings**
  – Provide webinar access
  – Provide call-in line for public comment

• **Increase Access to Board Information**
  – Easily found and comprehensive Annual Report
  – Improve accessibility and content of board websites
IPI/Consumer Reports State Medical Board Website Project (2016)

• Reviewed 65 state medical/osteopathic board websites
• Evaluated 8 categories covering usability & content – 61 criteria
  – Disciplinary information
  – Malpractice information
  – Criminal convictions
  – Search capabilities
• Wide variance in overall rating – highest score (CA – 84 out of 100) and lowest score (MS- 6)
• Part of Consumer Reports cover story on Drs. (April 2016)
Accessibility & Content of Board Websites

• Understand consumers as your audience:
  – Use easily understandable terms
  – Create a “Consumer Section”
  – Make search process easier to use

• Physician Profiles:
  – Current/historic/other state information on disciplinary actions
  – Plain English descriptions
  – Complete malpractice
  – Hospital actions
  – Criminal actions
  – Federal actions
Criteria for Public Members on State Health Professional Boards (2017)

• Most criteria only talk about disqualifiers (can't be a health provider)

• Affirmative criteria for public members:
  – Track record of consumer/public interest advocacy
  – Connections to grass root organizations representing diverse groups
  – Awareness of health concerns for diverse demographic groups
  – Demonstrated interest in health care safety and quality improvement
Columbus Dispatch Op-Ed 12-7-19

“It's More Than Strauss: How to Fix a Broken System”

• Insure state medical boards are sufficiently funded

• Expand and enforce mandatory reporting laws

• Replace secrecy with transparency

• Substantially increase the number and type of public members on boards
Quotes about State Medical Boards from Consumers

• “Form letters after months of doing nothing...A cruel hoax”

• “For so many reasons, I feel it is a waste of time to report the surgeon.”

• “They do all in their power to silence victims' screams creating the illusion of accountability and independence”

• “They are simply doctors protecting doctors”
Other Activities of Note re: Physician Oversight

- American Board of Medical Specialities Vision Commission on Continuing Competence/Follow-up Taskforces (Professionalism, Remediation)
- Physician measurement and reporting
- Apology/Disclosure practices/state laws – patient/family concerns
- Changes in physician practice – move to hospital employment Telemedicine/Interstate Compact – implications for patients/families?
Concluding Observations

• Understand medical boards operate in challenging/complex work within legal, regulatory and budget constraints

• Great deal of frustration now on part of harmed patients and families/nowhere to turn except each other, media, social media, & political process

• Balancing public protection and due process

• Consumer groups as allies if build awareness and trust?
More Information

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Medical Board Roundtable – Committee of Patient Safety Action Network

https://www.patientsafetyaction.org/medical-board-round-table