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January 24, 2014

Eric Fish, JD  
Senior Director of Legal Services  
Federation of State Medical Boards  
400 Fuller Wise Road, Suite 300  
Euless, TX 76039

Dear Mr. Fish:

The American Association of Osteopathic Examiners (AAOE) is the membership organization representing osteopathic physicians (DOs) serving on osteopathic and composite medical licensing boards throughout the United States. The AAOE supports the distinctiveness and integrity of osteopathic medicine and is the unified authority in matters that affect osteopathic medical licensure and discipline. AAOE members license and discipline both osteopathic and allopathic physicians, and serve to protect the public by evaluating the credentials of physicians seeking medical licensure in their jurisdiction.

The AAOE appreciates the opportunity to provide comments to the Federation of State Medical Board's (FSMB) draft Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (the Compact). An interstate compact for medical licensure that is adopted by every state allows individual states to provide appropriate oversight and regulation of the medical care being provided to its citizens while providing an alternative pathway for physicians wanting to hold licenses in multiple states. This system can ease the initial licensure process without forcing states to lower the standards they have put in place to protect patients. It is the opinion of the AAOE that if the Compact is widely adopted it could ultimately increase access to care for patients in states with physician workforce shortages without diminishing the quality of care those patients receive from physicians.

The AAOE does, however, have several concerns that it would like to see addressed before this draft document moves further along in the process. First, the AAOE believes it is necessary to provide equal recognition of the osteopathic profession within the Compact. The following changes would provide appropriate recognition of state osteopathic medical practice acts and the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination which is used by all fifty states and the District of Columbia for licensure of osteopathic physicians.

Page 2, line 13: addition of "and/or osteopathic medical practice act" immediately following "with the medical practice act".

Page 2, line 21: addition of "Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX-USA)" immediately following "(USMLE) or".

Page 7, line 16: addition of "and/or osteopathic medical practice act" immediately following "practice act".

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Additionally, the Compact currently fails to recognize each of the distinct licensing jurisdictions within the makeup of the Commission. Fourteen states have separate licensing bodies overseeing DOs and MDs and it is essential that each jurisdiction be recognized and represented within the Commission. The AAOE requests that the Compact be amended to provide this representation so that the Commission will account for differences in state licensure requirements for each branch of medicine. The AAOE requests the following change:

Page 8, lines 20 and 21: addition of “from each licensing board” immediately following “one voting representative”; delete “state’s” immediately preceding “Commissioner” and replace with “jurisdiction’s”.

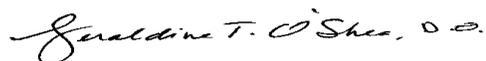
The AAOE is also concerned with the language requiring the Commission to accept “any and all” donations. This language is not only overly prescriptive, but could lead to abuses and conflicts of interest. The AAOE would prefer if this language is amended to the following, which would allow the policies and procedures of the Commission to dictate acceptance and use of donations and grants and therefore eliminate these concerns.

Page 11, lines 19 and 20: delete “any and all” immediately following “Accept”; insert “in a manner consistent with the conflict of interest policies established by the Commission” immediately following “to receive, utilize and dispose of it”.

Finally, the AAOE believes that section 23. BINDING EFFECT OF COMPACT AND OTHER LAWS provides further argument for the need to provide each licensing jurisdiction with representation on the Commission. This will provide the appropriate oversight and expertise needed to ensure that the Compact recognizes state licensing laws and regulations and the differences between osteopathic medical and medical practice acts nationally. For this reason, we ask that the FSMB pay particular attention to the AAOE’s request concerning representation on the Commission.

Again, the AAOE appreciates the opportunity to comment on this important document. We are happy to discuss any of these comments and concerns with FSMB staff or the workgroup developing the Compact.

Respectfully submitted,



Geraldine T. O’Shea, DO  
President

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