



**American Association
of Osteopathic Examiners**

State Licensing Boards Take Action Against COVID Misinformation – and Legislatures Respond

Following the Federation of State Medical Boards' (FSMB) July [statement](#) in opposition to COVID vaccine misinformation, state medical boards ([MS](#), [WA](#)) have begun taking action to reduce the spread of misinformation and disinformation by physicians licensed in their states.

In September, the Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners issued a [statement](#) concurring with the FSMB statement, and last month, the legislature responded by introducing two bills ([HB 9028](#) and [HB 9020](#)) that would have prohibited the state's two medical boards from taking adverse action against a physician related solely to their "prescription, recommendation, use or opinion relative to a treatment for COVID-19, including a treatment that is not indicated for COVID-19 or is not recommended or regulated by the Department of Health, the Board or the Federal Food and Drug Administration."

The bills, which would have covered any recommendation made "so long as the physician exercised independent medical judgment and believes the medical treatment is in the best interest of the patient," were considered in the General Assembly's short special session on coronavirus legislation, but ultimately did not pass.

On a related note, a group of nearly 100 physicians in Alaska [signed on to a November 16th letter](#) authored by Merijeane Moore, DO, urging the state medical board to investigate a group of physicians who spread COVID disinformation - including false claims about vaccines, ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine - during an event in Anchorage last month.

The letter quotes [a recent statement](#) from the American Boards of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine and Pediatrics that describes such conduct by physicians as "unethical, unprofessional and dangerous."

In Florida News...

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis recently signed into law [HB 833](#), the "Protecting DNA Privacy Act." The stated purpose of the legislation is to protect a person's DNA from being collected or analyzed without his or her express consent, and it will have the biggest impact on physicians who employ DNA testing in their practices.

Due to the broad definition of the term "DNA sample," however, the law could inadvertently impact many other physicians. The law defines "DNA

sample” as *any* human biological specimen from which DNA can be extracted, and it criminalizes the transfer of any such samples to a third party without the patient’s express consent.

This could mean that physicians and medical systems who transfer medical waste to a third party for cleaning or disposal to obtain must express patient consent beforehand, and Florida medical groups are working to clarify this definition in the upcoming legislative session.

NBOME Strategic Planning Focus Session Summary

On November 8th, the NBOME held a focus session in preparation for development of a new strategic plan in early 2022, as well as input on their mission, vision and values. This particular focus session included individuals representing the interests of students, patients, and medical licensing board members, and the AAOE was represented by Immediate Past President, Michael Wieting, DO.

Topics discussed included:

- Diversity, equity and inclusion in the assessment process
- Addressing changing social determinants of health
- Earning and maintaining the public’s trust
- Maintaining an emphasis on osteopathic content and basic professional tenets
- Secondary use of licensing exams by program directors as a screening tool for residency applicants
- Ensuring that applicants for licensure demonstrate the competencies needed to independently practice osteopathic medicine

IAMRA 2021 Virtual Conference Summary

On October 12 – 14, the International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA) held a [virtual conference](#) attended by AAOE President Alexios Carayannopoulos, DO. The theme of the conference was “Supporting a workforce under pressure – the regulator’s role,” and it featured speakers from the World Health Organization, the FSMB, the NBOME, and other leaders in the international medical regulatory space.

The opening keynote covered the challenges of COVID-19, including misinformation and backlash against medical recommendations such as vaccines and mask wearing, as well as positive changes, such as the increased use of telemedicine and the creation of new guidelines in countries that did not previously have them. Breakout session speakers took a deeper dive into issues like the regulatory response to COVID misinformation, the prevention of physician recidivism, and the evolution of physician competency assessment.

Save-the-Dates: FSMB 2022 Annual Meeting & DO Day on Capitol Hill

The Federation of State Medical Boards has [announced](#) plans to hold an in-person Annual Meeting on April 28 – 30, 2022 in New Orleans, Louisiana. In

the past, the AAOE has held its Annual Meeting in conjunction with the FSMB Annual Meeting, and we will notify membership as soon as possible of our plans in relation to the FSMB meeting.

The AOA plans to hold its annual [DO Day on Capitol Hill](#) and health policy conference on April 23 – 27th, 2022 in Washington, D.C. The health policy conference will take place virtually on April 23 – 24th, followed by our in-person DO Day on April 26 – 27th. Registration will open soon to osteopathic physicians, students, residents and affiliate leaders.

Interested in Advocacy? Sign Up for the (Free) Osteopathic Advocacy Network!

The AOA is working on behalf of DOs every day, but you are the best advocate for the osteopathic profession and your elected officials WANT to hear from you. [Sign up](#) for our free Osteopathic Advocacy Network (OAN) to receive alerts on legislation relevant to your state and specialty, and voice your opinion directly to your lawmakers with the click of a button.

OAN members are also invited to monthly roundtables to hear from AOA public policy staff, affiliates and elected officials about timely issues of relevance to the osteopathic profession, and to discuss how we can better support you in your practice.

AAOE Educational Summit

Please keep an eye out for the Doodle scheduling poll for our virtual 2021 American Association of Osteopathic Examiners (AAOE) Educational Summit, which will be circulated in the coming weeks. In addition to AAOE partner updates, we will take a deeper dive into issues that medical regulatory bodies are facing during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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