



Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure

Newsletter

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Fall 2025

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Reminder of Board Opinion Regarding Practice Drift

Over the past year, the Board has seen numerous grievances filed against physicians involving practice drift. With that in mind, the Board would like to remind each licensee of its opinion on the matter, which can be found below:

LEGAL AUTHORITY - Pursuant to KRS 311.602, the following Board opinion is issued to assist Board licensees in determining what actions would constitute unacceptable conduct under the provisions of KRS 311.595 and/or KRS 311.597. The Board has decided to publish this opinion because it addresses issues of significant public and medical interest.

DEFINITION - As used in this opinion, "practice drift" means a physician's shift away from the scope of the specialty in which he/she formally trained (in traditional medical education and training pathways) into the scope of another specialty. **OPINION** - A license to practice medicine or osteopathy in the Commonwealth of Kentucky provides the licensee the privilege of practicing the full scope of medicine or osteopathy. This privilege comes with substantial responsibility and commensurate accountability. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the licensee, who shifts from their primary and formally trained area of practice expertise to another, to ensure that they are able to meet and conform to all acceptable and prevailing standards of any practice area/specialty in which they engage. Relevant to this responsibility, the Board may discipline a license for any departure from, or failure to conform to, the standards of acceptable and prevailing medical practice within the Commonwealth of Kentucky. See KRS 311.595 (9) and KRS 311.597(4).

When investigating cases, the Board holds the licensee accountable to the acceptable and prevailing medical practices of the specialty in which the licensee engaged as impetus for a grievance. For instance, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon offering hormone therapy will be held to the acceptable and prevailing medical practices within the specialty of endocrinology; and a board-certified emergency medicine physician offering botox, lasers and cosmetic procedures will be held to the acceptable and prevailing medical practices within the specialty of aesthetic dermatology or plastic and reconstructive surgery.

The Board cautions licensees who engage in practice drift. Licensees should consider the quality of training programs offered outside of traditional education and training pathways and should carefully consider whether the education and/or training offered would be comparable to the rigor and quality of a formal education, residency or fellowship training, or board certification within a practice specialty. The Board expects licensees to conform to the acceptable and prevailing medical practices associated with specialists in those fields. Published as Board Opinion on December 20, 2023.

Board Election of Officers

During the proceedings of the Board's September 18, 2025, meeting, members of Board held its annual election for leadership for the upcoming year. As a result, the Board selected William C. Thornbury, M.D., of Glasgow, to serve as Board President. Waqar Saleem, M.D., of Louisville, was elected as Vice President and serves as Chair of the Board's Inquiry/Hearing Panel A. Dale Toney, M.D., of Lexington was elected to serve as Secretary and will serve as the Chair of the Board's Inquiry/Hearing Panel B.

Board Orders can be viewed under the Physician Profile/
Verification of License link on the Board's website:

www.kbml.ky.gov

**Board Action Report (actions taken since
07/01/2025)**

**Christopher D. Adams, M.D., Sandy Hook, KY
License #47069**

Agreed Order of Surrender entered into
8/01/2025

**Jose Wenceslao V. Alzadon, M.D., Paintsville, KY
License #39571**

Order of Revocation issued 8/21/2025, effective
9/20/2025

**Emad R. Arzrumly, M.D., Apple Valley, MN License
#57581**

Order Terminating Agreed Order issued
9/24/2025

**James Bailes, Jr., M.D., Huntington, WV License
#59195**

Order Terminating Agreed Order issued
9/24/2025

Charles B. Barton, M.D., London, KY License #35965

Agreed Order entered into 8/04/2025

**Richard S. Chang, M.D., Santa Monica, CA License
#41330**

Agreed Order of Surrender entered into
7/24/2025

Debbie G. Fibel, M.D., Lexington, KY License #26673

Amended Agreed Order entered into 7/24/2025

**Michael E. Fletcher, M.D., Crestview Hills, KY
License #31154**

Order of Indefinite Restriction issued 9/24/2025,
effective 10/24/2025

Tina G. Gaunt, M.D., Pikeville, KY License #36641

Agreed Order entered into 9/09/2025

Elaine C. Jones, M.D., Dallas, TX License #58689

Agreed Order entered into 9/08/2025

**Reza Khodaverdian, M.D., Mission Viejo, CA License
#54647**

Agreed Order entered into 9/08/2025

**Cassandra M. Kirkpatrick, M.D., Cross Lanes, VA
License #43408**

Order Terminating Suspension Pursuant to 201
KAR 9:310 issued 7/30/2025

**Tom O. McGuire, Jr., M.D., Shelbyana, KY License
#20022**

Agreed Order entered into 7/07/2025

Thomas J. Moore, M.D., Corbin, KY License #22596

Agreed Order of Surrender entered into
8/21/2025

Ruth Pan, M.D. Sacramento, CA License #C1222

Agreed Order entered into 9/05/2025

**Lawrence H. Peters, M.D., Louisville, KY License
#31716**

Order of Indefinite Restriction issued 7/22/2025

**John C. Tapp, M.D., Bowling Green, KY License
#14523**

Agreed Order of Retirement entered into
8/08/2025

**Andrew R. Usery, M.D., Lexington, KY License
#46323**

Agreed Order entered into 9/04/2025

**Timothy J. Ziolkowski, M.D., Corbin, KY License
#39137**

Order Terminating Agreed Order issued
8/25/2025

Sajad Zalzal, M.D., Dearborn, MI License #52859

Agreed Order entered into 9/03/2025

**Restrictions have also been placed on the following
physicians' licenses pending resolution of charges
brought against them.**

Lawrence A. Bean, M.D., Heath, TX License #C1587

Emergency Order of Suspension Pursuant to
IMLC issued 9/04/2025 and Complaint issued
9/19/2025

**Sandeep Sagar, M.D., Owensboro, KY License
#53442**

Emergency Order of Suspension issued
9/12/2025

**Lesa S. Sutton-Davis, M.D., Goshen, KY License
#36607**

Complaint & Emergency Order of Suspension
issued 8/25/2025

Renewal of Physician Licenses for 2026

In late December, physicians holding an active license will receive a notice by mail with instructions to renew his or her license. Physicians holding a traditional license will be able to renew their license online at www.kbml.ky.gov.

To complete the renewal, physicians will be required to verify and update their unique licensure information. The fee to renew online will be \$150.00. Physicians who renew by paper will be assessed an additional \$10.00 fee. Please note that physicians holding a compact license will be required to renew his or her license on the IMLCC site. Specific instructions for this process will be sent to compact licensed physician in late December.

The link to renew a license on the Board's website will not be available until the first week of January 2026. As a reminder, the Board no longer mails wallet cards upon completion of renewal. A license verification can be obtained online at no charge at www.kbml.ky.gov.

Warning – Scammers are Still Attempting to Impersonate Board and Government Officials

Please be aware the Board is still receiving numerous reports of a widespread fraud scheme in which telephone scammers are impersonating Board representatives to extort money or steal personal information. Over the past few years, the Board has even noted the scammers are employing more sophisticated tactics and have spoofed the Board main phone number in attempt to convince their target that the call is legitimate and occasionally will send documents on fake KBML letterhead.

Often, they will utilize an urgent and aggressive tone, refusing to speak or leave a message with anyone other than the physician and threaten some kind of Board action or action against the physician's DEA unless thousands of dollars are wire transferred or sent via untraceable gift card numbers or bitcoin. There have even been reports that these scammers are informing physicians that involving their attorneys will only make things worse, which certainly should raise a red flag.

With these reports in mind, the Board would like to remind you that our office does not operate in this manner and any correspondence from the Board would appear on formal Board letterhead or from an email address ending with ky.gov. For instance, our general email is kbml@ky.gov.

It is important to note that physicians throughout the state have received these phone calls. While the appropriate authorities have been made aware of these fraudulent attempts, the Board encourages all its licensees to be on alert and are encouraged to contact our office at (502) 429-7150 in the event you want to verify official board communications.

Reminder on Death Certificate Signatures

The Board would like to remind its licensees of the statutory requirement regarding the timely signature of death certificates. Unfortunately, the untimely signing of death certificates continues to be one of the most frequent reasons why grievances are filed against physicians.

According to KRS 213.076, medical certification shall be completed, signed, and returned to the funeral director within five working days after presentation to the physician, dentist, or chiropractor in charge of the patient's care for the illness or condition which resulted in death, except when inquiry is required by KRS 72.400 to 72.475. In such cases, the coroner shall complete and sign the certificate within five days after receiving results of the inquiry as required by KRS 72.400 to 72.475. In the absence of the physician, dentist, or chiropractor, or with such person's approval, the certificate may be completed and signed by his associate physician, dentist, or chiropractor; the chief medical officer of the institution in which death occurred; the physician who performed an autopsy upon the decedent; or a physician employed by the local health department, if the individual has access to the medical history of the case and death is due to natural causes.

Reminder on Death Certificate Signatures

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Certifying a death certificate is an important final step in completing a patient's care. Failure to comply with the statutory requirement often causes the involved families additional hardships when it comes to issues such as probating estates, insurance claims, social security, along with Veteran's and retirement benefits. Unfortunately, all too often the primary excuse the Board receives from physicians regarding this issue centers on the fact they were not made aware of the signature request.

The Board strongly encourages physicians to educate the members of their staff on the importance of bringing this matter to their attention. Please remember, Kentucky has an electronic registry, Kentucky Electronic Death Registration System (KY -EDRS), which enables death records to be filed online with the Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics (OVS), creating a paperless option. The online KY-EDRS supports collaboration among multiple users including funeral homes, hospitals, nursing homes, physicians, coroners, advanced practice registered nurses, physician assistants, dentists, or chiropractors and OVS. With KY-EDRS, funeral directors, physicians and medical certifiers can complete the death registration process faster with fewer errors and more efficiently.

By visiting the following link: <https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Pages/kyedrs.aspx>, you will find more information on how to register for KY-EDRS along with information on how to receive training on the system.

Reminder on Physician Self-Treatment or Treatment of Immediate Family Members

One of the common mistakes the members of the Board review on a regular basis center on physicians and their self-treatment or treatment of immediate family members. Due to this fact, the Board would like to remind all physicians that according to the American Medical Association's Code of Medical Ethics, physicians generally should not treat themselves or members of their immediate families. Professional objectivity may be compromised when an immediate family member or the physician is a patient; the physician's personal feelings may unduly influence his/her medical judgment, interfering with the care provided. When treating themselves or immediate family members, physicians may be inclined to treat problems that are beyond their expertise.

In emergency or isolated settings where there is no other qualified physician available, physicians should not hesitate to treat themselves or family members until another physician becomes available. However, it is important to note that it is not appropriate for physicians to write prescriptions for controlled substances for themselves or immediate family members.

Unfortunately, the Board has recently reviewed several cases involving allegations that physicians were self-prescribing a controlled substance, for themselves or an immediate family member, which resulted in disciplinary action. **Physicians are strongly encouraged** to become familiar with drugs that may be scheduled as controlled substances in Kentucky. A list of all controlled substances (Schedule II-V) in Kentucky can be found at [KentuckyScheduledDrugList.pdf](#).

The Board routinely enforces principles of the AMA Code of Medical Ethics discouraging physicians from treating themselves or members of their "immediate family." The Board, at its June 2024 meeting, amended its definition to the following: "Immediate Family" is defined as "husband or wife; natural or adoptive parent; child, or sibling; stepparent, stepchild, stepbrother, or stepsister; father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law; grandparent or grandchild; spouse of a grandparent or grandchild; and any person residing in the same residence as the licensee."

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Louisville, KY 40222**

Change of Address Notice

All information provided below is used to update the licensee's profile on the Board's website www.kbml.ky.gov.

You may also change your address online by clicking [here](#).

Date: _____ License Number: _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Practice Address: _____

Practice County: _____

Office Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

*The Board does not publish your email address.