

The Consumer View: State Medical Boards

Citizen Advocacy Center Meeting
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Carol Cronin
Executive Director - Informed Patient Institute
Chair, Medical Board Roundtable

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 Specialties 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

Carol Cronin

Executive Director - Informed Patient Institute

Chair – Medical Board Roundtable

c.cronin@comcast.net

Medical Board Roundtable – Committee of Patient
Safety Action Network

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