

June 13, 2008

A State Medical Board Perspective on the Comprehensive Review of USMLE

James N. Thompson, MD

President and CEO

Federation of State Medical Boards

overview

- **The Federation of State Medical Boards**
- **State Medical Boards and Licensure**
- **Comprehensive Review**

FSMB - The Organization & its Mission

Organization

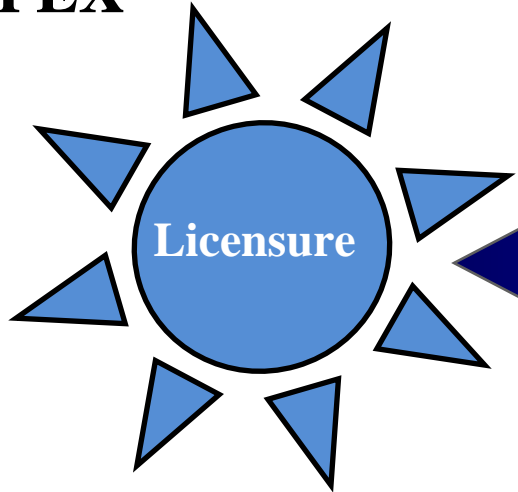
- 70 member state medical boards
- Non-Profit Association since 1912
- Located in Dallas/Fort Worth

Mission

Continual improvement in the quality, safety and integrity of health care through the development and promotion of high standards for physician licensure and practice.

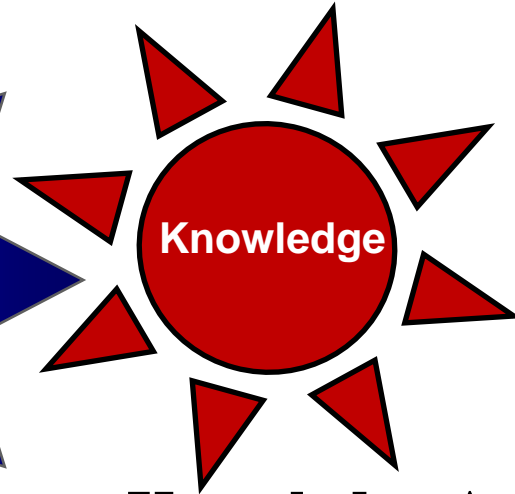
Licensure:

- USMLE
- FCVS
- SPEX



Regulation:

- PDC
- Internet Clearinghouse
- PLAS



Knowledge Acquisition:

- Education
- Publications
- Library/Research

Policy/Advocacy:

- Pain Guidelines
- Legislative Monitoring
- State/Federal Advocacy



Role of State Medical Boards

- State Medical Boards are charged by state law with the ultimate responsibility for assuring the quality of care provided by licensed physicians. The Boards are directly accountable to the public for this activity

*Ethics and Quality of Care Joint
Report from AMA and FSMB, 1995*

State Medical Boards: a triad of public protection

- Licensure
 - Purpose to protect the public
 - Privilege, not a right
 - Evaluate applicant's fitness to practice
- Regulation
 - Establish standards for physician licensure and practice
- Discipline
 - Take appropriate disciplinary action against individual physician licensees

Elements of Licensure

**Evaluation of
Medical
Education**

**Examination of
Knowledge and
Skills**

**Evaluation of
Postgraduate
Training**

**Reregistration to
Assess Current
Qualifications**

USMLE should reflect the current model for licensure

- Medical licensure in United States is...
 - General and undifferentiated
 - Not specialty-based or practice focused
- Assessment of medical knowledge is *essential*
- Other competencies important to state boards...
 - clinical and communication skills
 - professionalism

Consideration #1: The Medical Practice Act (MPA)

State medical boards (SMBs) reluctant to open MPA

■ Good news

- Most state statutes don't mention USMLE or use general language (e.g., “examination acceptable to board”)

■ Bad news

- 17 of 50 state statutes reference USMLE as three Step sequence

Statutory relief might require 18-24 months

Consideration #2: Scoring the USMLE

- Issue complicated by non-licensure uses of USMLE
- State boards empowered to determine passing score
 - Rely upon two-digit score
 - Use of heightened numeric score for candidates with multiple failures (Tennessee)
- Evidence of boards' preference - 84% supported number scoring in 2006 survey

James N. Thompson, M.D.
President/CEO
Federation of State Medical Boards
PO Box 619850
Dallas, TX 75261-9850
Tel: 817.868.4044 • Fax: 817.868.4144
Email: jthompson@fsmb.org