



## Arizona Medical Board

1740 W. Adams, Phoenix, AZ 85007 • website: [www.azmd.gov](http://www.azmd.gov)  
Phone (480) 551-2700 • Toll Free (877) 255-2212 • Fax (480) 551-2707

### Governor

**Douglas A. Ducey**

September 3, 2021

### Members

**R. Screven Farmer, M.D.**  
Chair  
Physician Member

**James Gillard, M.D., M.S.**  
Vice-Chair  
Physician Member

**Lois E. Krahn, M.D.**  
Secretary  
Physician Member

Jodi Bain, Esq.  
Public Member

Bruce A. Bethancourt, MD  
Physician Member

David Beyer, MD  
Physician Member

Laura Dorrell, M.S.N., R.N.  
Public Member/RN

Gary R. Figge, M.D.  
Physician Member

Pamela E. Jones  
Public Member

Eileen M. Oswald, M.P.H.  
Public Member

### Executive Director

**Patricia E. McSorley**

The Honorable Douglas Ducey  
Governor of Arizona  
State Capitol  
1700 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

### **RE: FY 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

Dear Governor Ducey:

Please accept the attached Annual Report on behalf of the Arizona Medical Board (AMB), submitted pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1402(G).

We appreciate the opportunity to share key information regarding the AMB, its mission and its accomplishments in the last fiscal year. The AMB and its staff are committed to the core function of protecting Arizona citizens while continually striving to improve service and ensure due process of law. We are committed to accomplishing these goals while operating within the strict compliance of our current statutes and rules.

The AMB and its staff continue to strive for efficiency and excellence in the regulatory oversight of the health professionals who are under the jurisdiction of this Board.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia E. McSorley".

Patricia E. McSorley  
Executive Director

Enclosure

C:

Trista Guzman-Glover, Director, Boards and Commissions, Governor's Office  
Members of the Arizona Regulatory Board of Physician Assistants  
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee of the Senate  
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee of the House of Representatives

# ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD



2020-2021

Annual Report

**Patricia E. McSorley, J.D.,**  
Executive Director

**Kristina A. Fredericksen, MPA,**  
Deputy Director

1740 W. Adams Street, Suite 4000  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

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# ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD

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## ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD MEMBERS

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The Arizona Medical Board ("AMB") is committed to serving the public through the fair and judicious licensing and regulation of allopathic physicians ("MDs"). Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute ("A.R.S.") § 32-1402, the AMB is comprised of twelve members: four public members, and eight physicians. One of the public members shall be a licensed practical or professional nurse.

**R. Screven Farmer, M.D.**

*Chair, Physician Member*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2023*

**James M. Gillard, M.S., M.D.,**

**F.A.C.E.P., F.A.A.E.M.**  
*Vice-Chair, Physician Member*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2025*

**Lois E. Krahn, M.D.**

*Secretary, Physician*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2024*

**Jodi A. Bain, M.A., J.D., LL.M.**

*Public Member*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2021*

**Bruce Bethancourt, M.D., F.A.C.P.**

*Physician Member*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2021*

**David C. Beyer, M.D.**

*Physician Member*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2022*

**Gary R. Figge, M.D.**

*Physician Member*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2024*

**Laura M. Dorrell, R.N.**

*Nurse/Public Member*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2025*

**Pamela E. Jones**

*Public Member*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2021*

**Eileen M. Oswald**

*Public Member*  
*Term Expiration 7/1/2025*

Additional information related to the AMB Members  
may be found at:

<https://www.azmd.gov/BoardOps/BoardOps#>

## OVERVIEW

The AMB focuses on public protection and directs its efforts to its two main functions: the licensing and regulation of allopathic physicians. AMB Board Members and AMB Staff work together to fulfill the AMB's mission and through its collaborative efforts contribute to providing safe standard of care treatment for the citizens of Arizona.

The AMB provides reference and educational materials for both the physician community and public constituents. To that end, the AMB continues to make great strides in the area of public outreach. In addition to successful e-newsletters, the AMB continues to use targeted e-mail blasts to physicians for important news and information updates as available and via social media with its Twitter page

Staff addressed multiple groups and provided presentations to a wide range of audiences, including University of Arizona medical students, Arizona State University regulatory policy students, MATFORCE, a Yavapai County coalition addressing substance abuse issues and the Arizona Telemedicine Policy Symposium attendees, also MICA (Mutual Insurance Company of Arizona) webinar for attorneys; Maricopa County Medical Society - Advocating for Improved Physician Health Programs.

The AMB continued its collaboration with various health regulatory agencies to address the healthcare concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The AMB collaborated with ADHS to issue COVID-19 temporary emergency licenses for expeditious licensing to increase the number of available physicians to treat Arizona citizens during the health crisis.

## LICENSING

The AMB issued 2,163 initial full MD licenses in Fiscal Year ("FY") 21. The average number of days to approve a license from receipt of the application to issuance of the license was 85 days; this represents a slight increase of days to approve issuance from FY20. This slight increase in processing times correlates with introduction of the Temporary Emergency License, introduced in April 2020, which resulted in an increase to the licensing staff workload. Licensing staff worked expeditiously to process over 600 applications to meet the increased demand for physicians during the Pandemic. The AMB also issued 1,579 Post-Graduate Training Permits, and an additional 43 assorted licenses (Pro Bono, Locum Tenens, and Teaching Licenses) along with 613 dispensing certificates.

The total number of licensed MDs ending in FY21 is 26,597 up from 25,921 in FY20.

Description	FY 2020	FY 2021
Initial Full MD Licenses	1,959	2,163
# of Days to Approve a License from Receipt of the Application to Issuance of License	75	85
Post Graduate Training Permits	1,673	1,579
Pro Bono Licenses	32	40
Locum Tenens Licenses	2	0
Teaching Licenses	5	3
Dispensing Certificates	727	613
Customer Satisfaction <sup>1</sup>	95%	92%

<sup>1</sup> Based upon customer satisfaction surveys, recorded monthly from licensing customers. In FY20 and 21, the AMB had excellent scores from physicians, scoring in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile both years.

## **UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION APPLICATION: BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO LICENSING**

In FY21, the AMB continued issuing Universal Recognition Applications, which allow the AMB to recognize and offer reciprocity to physicians establishing residency in Arizona, who are licensed in another state, for more than a year. This path to licensure offers an expeditious process as many primary source documents related to training and employment are not required. In FY21, the AMB received 211 MD Universal Recognition Applications, and 111 were issued.

### **Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Licenses**

The AMB continues to issue licenses through the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC) under a statutory agreement approved in FY17 by the Arizona Legislature. In FY21, the AMB issued 412 letters of qualification to Arizona licensed physicians seeking licensure through the IMLC, and granted 141 Arizona licenses to physicians licensed in another state through the IMLC agreement.

### **COVID-19 TEMPORARY EMERGENCY LICENSES**

This effort, initiated in FY20, continued in FY21, and 633 COVID-19 temporary emergency licenses were issued to physicians who were either licensed in another state, recently retired or inactive in Arizona, or a resident with one year of post graduate training and who attended an approved school of medicine. All fees were waived as an encouragement to provide care in Arizona during this crisis.

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## **REGULATION**

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The safe and competent delivery of healthcare to the citizens of the State of Arizona is accomplished largely by regulating allopathic physicians under the Arizona Medical Practice Act. The AMB's Investigations Department is responsible for investigating complaints and reports of unprofessional conduct regarding physicians throughout the state. When an investigation substantiates a violation of the Medical Practice Act, the AMB uses its authority to educate, discipline, and when appropriate, rehabilitate physicians to assure their fitness and competence in the service of the people of Arizona.

The AMB's investigation process is structured to ensure an impartial and unbiased investigation. The AMB's investigators devote much of their time to the serious responsibility of ensuring the public's safety. Investigators are specially trained and certified to investigate complaints and do so through the collection of evidence, conducting interviews, analyzing data, and formulating investigative reports as a means to objectively enforce the appropriate Arizona statutes.

Ultimately, the AMB is bound by its mission to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Arizonans. The actions the AMB takes are reflective of that mission. The AMB experienced an increase in investigation cases as a result of the State's efforts to respond to the national opioid crisis by focusing on inappropriate opioid prescribing. The AMB's emphasis is to educate physicians in new prescribing methodologies and if necessary, restricting the prescribing authority of physicians who continue to have issues with prescribing controlled substances under the new statute.

MD	FY 2020	FY 2021
Total Number of Complaints Opened per FY	1,176	1,158
Average Days to Complete an Investigation	190	186

### Physician Health Program (“PHP”)

The PHP is an AMB sponsored program that ensures the protection of the public and safety through education, intervention, post-treatment monitoring and support for allopathic physicians and physician assistants who may suffer from substance abuse, substance dependence, and medical, psychiatric, psychological or behavioral health disorders

The PHP includes seven board certified Assessors who perform health assessments and two contracted Monitors who perform post-treatment monitoring of allopathic physicians and physician assistants. The role of a monitor is to provide ongoing case management to ensure participants are actively pursuing required treatment. They also monitor for compliance with monitoring plans determined by the assessment and evaluation of each participant to assure that their health related issues do not affect their ability to safely practice medicine. The monitor is required to coordinate, manage, and interpret all laboratory test results. Currently, there are 89 licensees participating in the AMB's PHP Monitored Aftercare Program.

### DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

During FY21 the AMB held a total of 24 meetings (Regular Session, Special Teleconference, and Joint Officers, Off-Site Planning, Committee and Summary Action meetings) in which 83 disciplinary actions were taken. Disciplinary actions taken against a licensee are public actions. The AMB identifies the need for on-going physician education, discipline and remediation in furtherance of its primary mission, to protect the health and safety of Arizona’s citizens.

Of the actions taken in FY21, there were 11 Letters of Reprimand, 4 Decrees of Censure, 6 Practice Restrictions, 24 Probationary Orders, 16 Licenses Revoked/Surrendered, 2 Inactivation of license with Cause, two License Denials and zero Summary Suspensions. The Executive Director issued 18 Interim Practice Restrictions in accordance with the authority delegated to her.

MD	FY 2020	FY 2021
Letter of Reprimand	6	11
Decree of Censure	1	4
Practice Restriction	9	6
Probation	28	24
Loss of License (Revocation/Surrender)	28	16
Interim Practice Restriction	29	18
Summary Suspension	6	0
Inactivation with Cause	3	2
Denial of Medical License <sup>2</sup>	0	2

<sup>2</sup> Physicians are provided with the opportunity to withdraw their application in lieu of denial.

## NON-DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Of the non-disciplinary actions taken by the AMB in FY21, there were 118 Advisory Letters, 19 Advisory Letters with Non-Disciplinary Continuing Medical Education (“CME”), and zero Non-Disciplinary CME.

MD	FY 2020	FY 2021
Advisory Letters	96	118
Advisory Letters with Non Disciplinary CME	24	19
Non Disciplinary CME	0	0

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Employee Turnover Report

The AMB had a turnover of five full-time and one part-time employees, as follows:

One full-time in the Licensing Office; one full-time in the Support Services Office; one full-time in the Investigations Office; two full-time in Information Technologies Office; and one part-time employee in the Medical Consultants Office.

This resulted in a 12.5% Turnover Ratio for FY21. Noted, of the 6 total employees who left the AMB, one was a retirement. The balance was comprised of resignations and a termination.

The AMB hired a total of five employees, four full-time and one part-time, as follows:

Four full-time employees: two Investigators and one in Support Services. The one part-time employee was a Medical Consultant.

All investigators hired in FY21 who were required to attend the Investigator Training in one year from hire have attended or are scheduled to attend, as required by A.R.S. §32-1405.C.1, and complied with the requirements therein.

### FY 2021 Turnover Rate & Ratio Number of Employees by Office

#### AMB Employees FY 2021

**48**

<u>Department</u>	<u># Employees</u>	<u>Status</u>
Licensing	1	Full Time
Support Services	1	Full Time
Investigations Office	1	Full Time
Information Technologies	2	Full Time
Medical Consultants	1	Part Time

**AMB Turnover Rate**  
**AMB Turnover Ratio**

**6**  
**12.5%**

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## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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The Information Technology Department (“IT”) remains committed to serving the business operations of the AMB. IT provides AMB-wide integrated solutions with an emphasis on superior customer service. The IT Department strives to ensure effective and efficient utilization of new and existing technology resources and investments for our internal and external customers.

In FY21, the AMB successfully transitioned its networking operations to the cloud in alignment with the Governor’s Cloud First Initiative and the Agency’s IT strategic plan from FY20. This transition and modernization was designed to allow the AMB to advance its processes and functions in tandem with developing technology. By aligning its IT operations with the recommendations and products identified by the State, the AMB has the capability to tap into new technologies and security features with potential cost sharing as the State leverages its enterprise abilities in procuring services.

By moving operations to the cloud, the AMB’s long term goals include improvement of the services it offers its consumers including: the ability for applicants to upload their own documents to the licensing files thereby reducing the number of pieces of mail that Staff needs to sort and assign; the ability to pay licensing fees on-line by using a credit card with the assurance that state of the art data security is in place, with the ultimate goal to develop the AMB’s technology to allow all persons transacting business with the AMB to do so through hand held devices. By implementing and utilizing a SaaS system, the AMB also enhances its ability to obtain statistical information and data to assist in its decision making.