

WHA Physician Leaders Council Calls for Continued Work on MEB Chaperone Rule

COVID regulatory challenges, new issues raised by the Medical Examining Board's latest proposed chaperone rule, reforming health care licensure processes and planning for the March 2023 WHA Physician Leadership Development Conference.

COVID regulatory compliance

Made up of chief medical officers and other senior physician leaders at WHA member organizations, the Council raised and discussed current challenges in interpreting ongoing COVID-specific regulatory directives. In an evolving and often unclear regulatory environment, Council members shared the COVID mitigation steps they were continuing or discontinuing. Council members remained concerned about how to avoid non-compliance with federal COVID rules in health care settings, including CMS rules on vaccines.

Medical Examining Board Chaperone Rule

WHA General Counsel Matthew Stanford and WHA Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk led a conversation with the Council on the Medical Examining Board's ongoing rulemaking effort regarding the use of chaperones. Stanford and Zenk detailed WHA's advocacy engagement and leadership to block two prior versions of the rule that would have added [at least \\$75m in annual health care costs](#).

Stanford and Zenk detailed the [latest version of the Medical Examining Board's draft proposed chaperone rule](#), and sought input from the Council on what, if any, advocacy engagement WHA should have on the new version of the proposed rule.

While the latest version of the draft rule would have significantly lower implementation costs compared to the Board's prior approach to the rule, the Council saw new issues and concerns for hospitals, physician employers, and their physicians that the new rule would create. The Council strongly encouraged WHA to continue its advocacy engagement to address those issues and concerns.

Stanford walked through the rulemaking process and said the rule still has multiple procedural steps before the rule could be enacted. He indicated the rule could not be finalized until the first quarter of 2023 at the earliest.

The first formal step for public input was a call by the Medical Examining Board for comments on the economic impact of the draft proposed rule. In response to that request for comments, WHA submitted an [economic impact comment letter](#) on the new proposed rule to the Medical Examining Board following the Council meeting. WHA was the only organization to submit economic impact comments to the Board on the latest draft of the proposed chaperone rule.

Health care workforce licensure processing reforms

Zenk led a conversation with the Council regarding barriers to timely licensure for physicians and other health care professionals and proposing reforms that may break down obstacles to entry for health care workers in Wisconsin.

Zenk was appointed to serve as one of only two health care members and one of only five public members of the [Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses](#). This Committee first met on Aug. 2 and will meet again Sept. 27, with the goal of proposing reforms that could be considered in the next legislative session beginning January 2023.

After passing critical licensure process reform in Wisconsin Act 10 during the COVID-19 pandemic, WHA remains a central figure in conversations with state policymakers about reforming licensure processes. Zenk discussed the benefits of expedited licensure established through the Wisconsin Act 10 process, but also discussed its challenges—which include awareness by third-party credentialing agencies, insurance companies and even federal agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Agency.

“We have experienced a significant improvement in the last several months in both the awareness and utility of Wisconsin Act 10 licenses, including thousands of health care workers who have received their license through this process since it first began,” said Zenk. “But more can and needs to be done, particularly to help those new graduates and others who cannot utilize an Act 10 license but are waiting two months or longer to receive their license.”

Zenk discussed proposals that could better utilize processes that employers already undertake, like background checks and third-party verification, to leverage—rather than duplicate—this work when an applicant employed by a hospital or health system applies for a Wisconsin license.

WHA Physician Leadership Development Conference

The 2023 WHA Physician Leadership Development Conference is scheduled for March 10-11, 2023, and will be returning to the American Club in Kohler, Wisconsin. The Council provided input on potential topics and sessions, as Wisconsin’s premier physician leadership conference returns to an in-person format for 2023. Registration will open at the end of November.

Other Articles in this Issue

- [WHA Physician Leaders Council Calls for Continued Work on MEB Chaperone Rule](#)
- [Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses Holds Second Hearing](#)
- [WHA on Capitol Hill Urging Congress to Extend Rural Hospital Designations and Regulatory Flexibilities](#)
- [Registration Open for 2023 WHA Health Care Leadership Academy](#)