

ARIZONA REGULATORY BOARD OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS



2015-
2016

Annual Report

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ARIZONA REGULATORY BOARD OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Arizona Regulatory Board of Physician Assistants ("ARBoPA") is committed to serving the public through the judicious licensing and regulation and education of physician assistants ("PAs"). The ARBoPA is comprised of ten members - five physician assistants, four physician members and one public member.

The Current Board Members:

Geoffrey W. Hoffa, D.H.S.c., P.A.-C

Chair, Physician Assistant Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2017

Gary A. Smith, M.D., F.A.A.C.P.

Physician Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2017

Myles A. Whitfield, P.A.-C

Vice-Chair, Physician Assistant Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2018

Jacqueline J. Spiegel, P.A.-C, D.F.A.A.P.A.

Physician Assistant Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2018

Randy D. Danielsen, PhD, P.A., D.F.A.A.P.A.

Physician Assistant Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2018

Patrick J. Van Zanen

Public Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2018

Vacant

Physician Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2017

Thomas E. "TK" Kelly, M.D.

Physician Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2018

Sheldon G. Liechty, P.A.

Physician Assistant Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2018

Kit C. McCalla, D.O.

Physician Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2016

Carole Crevier

Public Member

Term Expiration 6/30/2015

For more information on individual Board Members see:

<http://www.azpa.gov/ARBoPA/About.aspx>

FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- *Biennial Licensure*

The ARBoPA worked with the Arizona State Legislature and the Legislature passed Senate Bill 1213 implementing a new two-year license cycle for all Arizona physician assistants. These changes took effect January 1, 2016 and the response from the regulated community has been extremely positive.

- *Fluoroscopy*

During the 2016 Legislative Session the Arizona Legislature passed, and Governor Ducey signed SB1096 into law. One of the provisions of the bill added physician assistants (PAs) to the list of health care professionals *not* required to obtain another license for the use of a diagnostic x-ray machine, allowing the Arizona Regulatory Board of Physician Assistants (ARBoPA) to retain jurisdiction over PAs using ionizing radiation while performing health care tasks. The language which amends A.R.S. § 30-672 (D) (Exemptions) now states:

*The agency shall not require persons licensed in this state to practice as a dentist, **physician assistant**, chiropodist, or veterinarian or licensed in this state to practice medicine, surgery, osteopathy, chiropractic or naturopathic medicine to obtain any other license for the use of a diagnostic x-ray machine, but these persons are governed by their own licensing acts.*

- *CME Requirement*

Also during the 2016 Legislative Session, the Arizona Legislature passed and Governor Ducey signed House Bill 2359 into law related to continuing medical education requirements. The new section in A.R.S. § 32-2523 now states:

F. The continuing medical education requirement in subsection A of this section is deemed satisfied if, at the time of renewal, the licensee holds a certification in good standing from a certifying body approved by the board.

LICENSING

The ARBoPA issued 306 initial PA licenses in Fiscal Year (“FY”) 2016, and averaged 11 days to approve a license. The total number of licensed physician assistants presently in Arizona is 2789, up from 2662 in FY 2015.

Description	FY 2015	FY 2016
Initial Full PA Licenses	352	306
Average # of Days to Approve a License	18	11

REGULATION

The ARBoPA works to ensure the safe and competent delivery of health care to the citizens of the State of Arizona by regulating PAs under the Arizona Medical Practice Act. The ARBoPA’s Investigations Department investigates complaints and reports of unprofessional conduct regarding PAs throughout the state. When an investigation substantiates a violation of statute, the ARBoPA uses its authority to educate, discipline, and when appropriate rehabilitate physician assistants to assure their fitness and competence in the service of the people of Arizona.

The ARBoPA 's complaint process is structured to ensure an impartial and unbiased investigation. The ARBoPA's investigators devote much of their time to the serious responsibility of ensuring the public's safety. Investigators specially trained and certified, examine complaints and 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 ARBoPA is bound by its mission to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Arizonans. The actions the ARBoPA takes are reflective of that mission. The Investigations Department opened a total of 111 complaints in FY 2016, showing a 13.0% decrease compared to 135 in FY 2015. The Department ended the fiscal year with 36 open investigations with an average of 154 days to complete an investigation.

PA	FY 2015	FY 2016
Open Investigations	50	36
Average Days to Complete an Investigation	124	154
Total Number of Complaints Opened	135	111

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Disciplinary actions taken against a licensee are public records. Ultimately, the ARBoPA balances the need for physician assistant discipline and remediation with its primary mission to protect the health and safety of Arizona's citizens.

Of the actions taken in FY 2016, there were 3 Letters of Reprimand, 1 Probationary Order, 2 Licenses Revoked/Surrendered, and 1 Inactivation with Cause. (See table below)

PA	FY 2015	FY 2016
Letter of Reprimand	0	3
Letter of Reprimand with Probation	3	5
Decree of Censure with Probation	1	0
Practice Restriction	0	0
Probation	1	0
Loss of License (Revocation/Surrender)	1	2
Interim Practice Restriction	3	2
Summary Suspension	0	0
Inactivation with Cause	0	1
Denial of PA License	0	0
Interim Practice Limitation – ED	0	3
Advisory Letter	21	14
Advisory Letter with Non Disciplinary CME	6	5

HUMAN RESOURCES

Please Note: The ARBoPA shares its employees with the Arizona Medical Board. The following human resource narrative is reflective of the shared Boards' resources:

The turnover rate included four full-time employees, one from the Board Operations Department, one in the Investigations Department, and two in the Licensing Department in FY 2016. This constitutes a 7.8% turnover ratio of the Boards' fifty-one (51) employees.

The Boards also had a total of sixteen contracted employees for FY 2016, with a turnover of seven contracted employees, resulting in a 43.8% turnover ratio. This was comprised of two from the Executive Office, one from the Board Operations Department, one from the Information Technology Department, and two from the Licensing Department.

The Boards hired one full-time Investigator in FY 2016 (August 2015). The Investigator hired completed Investigator training in September 2015, as required by Arizona Revised Statute ("A.R.S.") § 32-1405.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology Department ("IT") continues to serve the business operations of the ARBoPA by being a proactive leader by identifying issues and offering innovative solutions to enable the agency to accomplish their goals, and provide quality services to our customers. IT strives to provide agency-wide, integrated solutions with an emphasis on superior customer service and ensuring effective and efficient utilization of new and existing technology resources and investments. We strive to exceed internal and external service expectations by implementing leading-edge solutions in-line with established best practices. There have been many technological advances made in FY 2016, as highlighted below.

Much time and effort was spent on protecting the confidentiality and integrity, and improving the availability of our Agency's information resources. The IT Office made many improvements that were implemented including: improving the agencies Virtual Desktop solution, many improved network infrastructure solutions, successfully implementing changes to the PA renewal cycle for our licensees per the 2015 Senate Bill 1213, and are currently working towards redesigning our public facing website to improve usability.

The combined agency websites received a total of 17,056 views to its Meeting Streaming Media Archive, which includes both live and archived Board Meeting videos.

The combined agency database is more than a compilation of information, it is the primary application from which the two boards operate and through which public information is disseminated. There was much advancement made over the course of the past year, with focus on improving the overall functionality of the business driven application. IT plans to continue developing technological methods for automation and streamlining current processes. We also intend to find more ways to leverage the internet for additional online service delivery to promote increased efficiency. We are currently working on implementing an online process for delivering licensee case files and the possibility of communicating with physician assistants via text messaging in the future.