

Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners and Medical Licensure Commission



MEDICALDIGEST

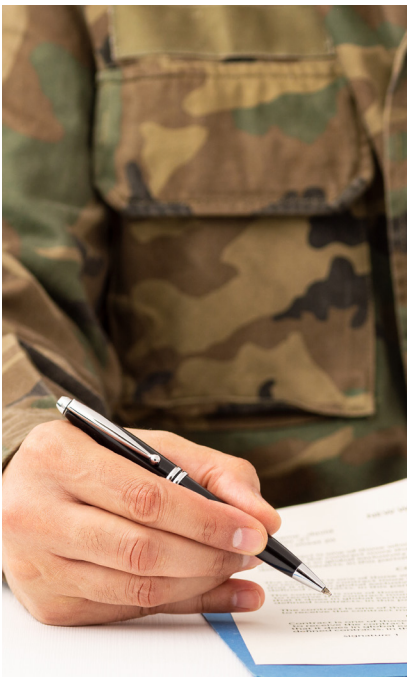
Fall 2021 | www.albme.gov

2022 License and Registration Renewals

Practitioners are required to complete renewal applications. Delegation of this responsibility could result in disciplinary action should fraudulent information be inadvertently submitted to the Board or Commission.

- Licenses and registrations expire annually on Dec. 31 and may be renewed beginning on Oct. 1 by entering the Licensee Portal.
- Confirm address, telephone number(s), email address, etc., before proceeding to the renewal process.
- Scroll to grid containing your licenses and registrations available for renewal.
- Click “Renew” in the license row and complete license renewal.
- Add to cart to pay for all renewals at once.
- Return to the Licensee Portal to renew additional registrations.
- Receipts and renewal certificates may be printed upon completion of all renewals.

Expedited Temporary Licensure for Active Military and Spouses



Tiffany Seamon, Director of Credentialing, Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners

The Alabama Legislature passed a law earlier in 2021 that authorizes free, expedited twelve-month licenses for qualified active military personnel and their spouses. The temporary physician and assistant to physician licenses allow the practitioners to begin practicing in Alabama while they apply for a permanent license or to work while on a short assignment. A full license must be applied for within twelve months of the issuance of the temporary license.

The legislation was spearheaded by Lt. Gov. Will Ainsworth and introduced by Sen. Donnie Chesteen (R-Geneva) and Rep. Charlotte Meadows (R-Montgomery). The Board and Commission appreciate our representatives' efforts in ensuring the passage of this important legislation and continuing to champion significant causes on behalf of our service members and their families.

The Board and Commission implemented rules and procedures for the new license type and issued the first Temporary Military License on July 29, 2021. It is our pleasure to assist military personnel and their spouses with obtaining this expedited license.

A Celebration of Two Extraordinary Lives

We sadly lost two Board members this past September.



Patrick J. O'Neill, MD, had an incredible energy and drive that allowed him to juggle a busy general practice, five children, 15 grandchildren, and involvement in athletics, politics, and healthcare advocacy. Dr. O'Neill also served the educational community wherever he was located, serving on the school board, proctoring students from local medical schools, and serving as a resident examiner for the Canadian College of Family Physicians. As his family states, these are things that he did and enjoyed, but his greatest satisfaction was the friends he made along the way.

**Think where man's glory most
begins and ends, and say my
glory was I had such friends"
-W.B. Yates**

Dr. O'Neill was an enthusiastic, dedicated member of the Board of Medical Examiners. He had special interests in the areas of telemedicine, interstate licensure, professional boundary issues, and continuing medical education. While conducting Board business, Dr. O'Neill was the embodiment of James 1:19: "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." He was always measured and deliberate when discussing Board matters, but in private moments he revealed his deep empathy, wisdom, and amazing sense of humor. We will miss his lively presence and important contributions.



Jefferson Underwood, III, M.D., was almost literally larger than life. In full health and vigor when he joined the Board of Medical Examiners, Dr. Underwood's height was the first thing one may have noticed, but it didn't take long to understand that first and foremost, he was a physician -- medicine was a part of his fabric and his being. Service to the community was his highest priority. Dr. Underwood approached Board matters with gentle dignity and kindness and was always approachable, sympathetic, and fair.

MATTHEW 5:16

**"In the same way, let your light shine
before people, so they can see the
good things you do and praise your
Father who is in heaven."**

When Dr. Underwood was no longer able to attend Board meetings in person, he continued his duties remotely. As time progressed and we witnessed his "opponent" gaining ground, we were awed at Dr. Underwood's still-brilliant mind and his tenacity, still practicing medicine and performing his Board functions, albeit in a somewhat modified fashion. We were humbled by his quiet determination and the obviously deep love and devotion he had for his wife and family, and they for him. Dr. Underwood's opponent did not win. That one man could inspire and heal so many is the greatest victory.

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DISASTER PLANNING FOR YOUR MEDICAL PRACTICE

Most Alabamians are accustomed to planning for fire, tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods. However, disasters can also overwhelm a medical practice. Damages can range from shattered windows, power outages for long periods of time, disrupted phone systems, structural damage, and destroyed medical records. **The last 18 months has taught that pandemic disease is also a disaster that can cause overwhelming patient loads and debilitating staff shortages.**

Preparing for disasters is crucial for as little interruption as possible to patients and critical care services. Disaster planning requires continuous planning, organizing, training, and sometimes rehearsing. An effective disaster plan will help keep your practice focused on delivering care during a disaster.

Plan Ahead

Before a disaster happens, you should have a plan in place with a customized check list to fit your medical practice needs. Some of those plans should include:

- A detailed, written plan.
- Instructions to set up an instant messaging system for staff to communicate with one another when a wireless network is not available.
- **Protocols to protect yourself, your staff, and your patients during times of pandemic infectious disease.**
- Instructions for ensuring medical records are secure, including a plan for maintaining compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- Maintain the certificate of insurance for your medical malpractice coverage with you should you have to relocate your practice.
- If home health care agencies are caring for your patients, ensure these agencies have plans in place as well.
- Ensure you have a process in place for returning to practice after a disaster has occurred.

You should also create an inventory of all equipment if you do not have one, preferably with video, to make it easier for you and your insurance company when it comes to reimbursement of items destroyed or lost in a disaster.

Drills

Once you have a disaster plan in place, it is important to have drills to test the disaster plan so that your staff and you know exactly what to do in case of an emergency.

Board and Commission Covid-19 Response

The Board and Commission have strived to anticipate and respond to medical licensing issues arising from the pandemic by holding special meetings, adopting emergency rules, and responding to citizen questions and concerns. Our mission has been and will always be the protection of the health and safety of all Alabamians.

- March 13, 2020 - Governor Ivey declared a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- March 14, 2020 - the Board held its meeting early in order to complete business before anticipated disruptions and closures.
- March 16, 2020 - staff, except for a small skeleton crew, transitioned to working remotely.
- March 19 and 20, 2020 - the Board and Commission held emergency meetings to establish emergency licensure for out of state physicians and physician assistants to provide assistance in treating Alabama patients suffering from and affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- March 23, 2020 - emergency licensure provisions for physicians, physician assistants, and anesthesiology assistants went into effect.
- Through June 1, 2020, over 1,300 physician and 25 physician assistant emergency licenses were issued.
- Temporary emergency licenses were extended twice during the course of the public health emergency.
- July 6, 2021 - the state public health emergency was terminated by the Governor.
- July 21, 2021 - the Board and Commission approved an expedited process for the licensing of physicians that are active military and/or spouses of active military members in the state of Alabama.
- August 13, 2021 - Governor Ivey declared a new state health emergency due to a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases throughout the state and the associated stressors on hospitals and other health care facilities.
- August 18 and 25, 2021 - the Board and Commission approved emergency licensing of physicians and physician assistants to assist in hospital settings during the declared public health emergency.



NATIONAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTHS

OCTOBER

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month with multiple organizations
- Eye Injury Prevention Month with the American Academy of Ophthalmology
- Healthy Lung Month with the Lung Health Institute and other organizations
- Home Eye Safety Month with the American Academy of Ophthalmology
- National ADHD Awareness Month with the ADHD Awareness Month Coalition
- National Down Syndrome Awareness Month with the National Association for Down Syndrome and the National Down Syndrome Society
- Spina Bifida Awareness Month with the Spina Bifida Association
- Respiratory Care Week (Oct. 24–30) with the American Association for Respiratory Care

NOVEMBER

- American Diabetes Month with the American Diabetes Association and other organizations
- COPD Awareness Month with the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Trusted Source and other organizations
- Lung Cancer Awareness Month with the Lung Cancer Foundation of America, the American Lung Association, and other organizations
- National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month with the Alzheimer's Association
- National Epilepsy Awareness Month with the Epilepsy Foundation
- Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month with the Hirshberg Foundation

DECEMBER

- National Safe Toys and Gifts Month with Child & Family Services
- National Handwashing Awareness Week (Dec. 1–7) with Henry the Hand Foundation
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities (Dec. 3) with the United Nations
- National Influenza Vaccination Week (Dec. 6–12) with the CDC

REPORT OF PUBLIC ACTIONS OF THE MEDICAL LICENSURE COMMISSION AND BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

BME - July 2021

- None.

MLC - July 2021

- On July 29, the Commission denied the petition to reinstate the medical license of Vinson M. Disanto, DO, lic. no. DO.1189, Boca Raton FL.
- On June 30, the restrictions on the medical license of Craig C. Oliver, DO, lic. no. DO.2104, Mobile AL were removed, and the license was reinstated to full, unrestricted status.
- Effective June 30, following a hearing on the appeal of the denial of the application of Muhammad U. Kamal, MD, Montgomery AL, for a certificate of qualification to practice medicine, the Commission ordered the issuance of the certificate of qualification.

BME - August 2021

- On Aug. 11, the Board terminated the voluntary restriction on the certificate of qualification to practice medicine of Ijeoma Okeke, DO, lic. no. DO.2514, Selma AL.

MLC - August 2021

- Effective Aug. 11, the Jan. 15, 2021, Order of Probation of the medical license of Craig C. Oliver, DO, lic. no. DO.2104, Mobile AL, was amended.
- Effective Aug. 3, the probation placed on the medical license of Weston J. Welker, MD, lic no. MD.13209, York AL, is terminated.





Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners
Alabama Medical Licensure Commission

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Upcoming BME Meeting Dates

Oct 20 • Nov 18 • Dec 15

The public portion of each meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. CT (unless otherwise indicated) in the Dixon-Parker Building at 848 Washington Avenue in Montgomery, AL.

Meeting agendas and a full list of meeting dates and times can be found online at

www.albme.gov.

Upcoming MLC Meeting Dates

Oct 27 • Nov 22 • Dec 20

Meetings are held in the Dixon-Parker Building at 848 Washington Avenue in Montgomery, AL unless otherwise indicated.

Have questions or need assistance?

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About MedicalDigest...

MedicalDigest is the official publication of the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners and Medical Licensure Commission. It is published four times per year.

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Questions? Please contact the Board of Medical Examiners at (334) 242-4116.