



# MEDICALDIGEST

Spring 2024 | [www.albme.gov](http://www.albme.gov)

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Executive Director  
William M. Perkins

The main issues in Alabama healthcare policy addressed by the Board in 2023 were the opioid addiction and overdose crisis and critical shortages in the physician workforce.

Some emerging and controversial therapies also merited our attention, along with an update to rules governing the use of lasers and other light and energy-based devices.

Finally, the Board has made efforts to increase the quality and availability of continuing medical education courses to satisfy requirements for controlled substances prescribers and licensees in collaborative and supervisory practices.



## Alabama Board of Medical Examiners and Medical Licensure Commission

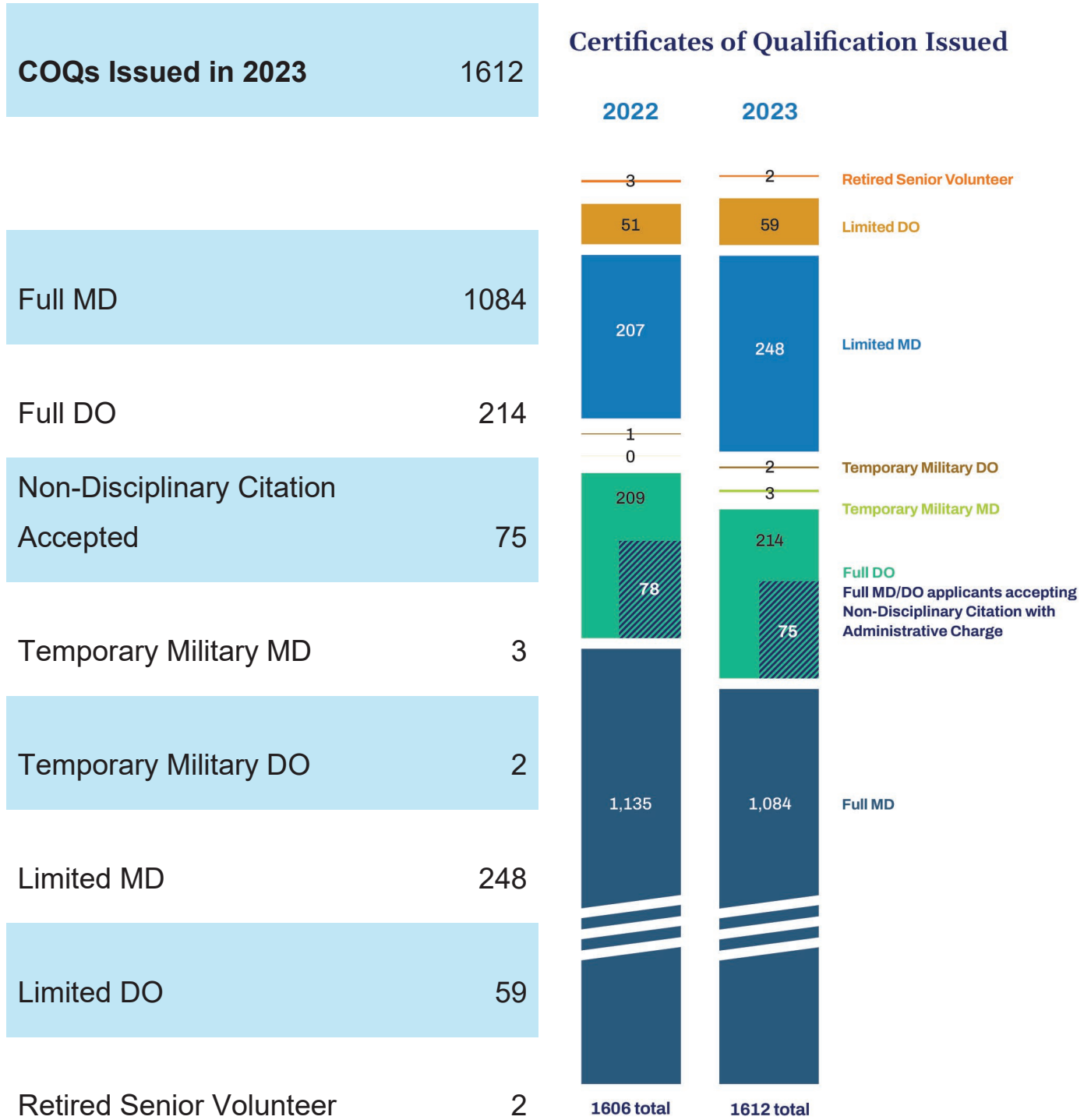
Email: [bme@albme.gov](mailto:bme@albme.gov)

[mlc@almlc.gov](mailto:mlc@almlc.gov)

Website: [www.albme.gov](http://www.albme.gov)

# MD/DO LICENSES ISSUED IN 2023

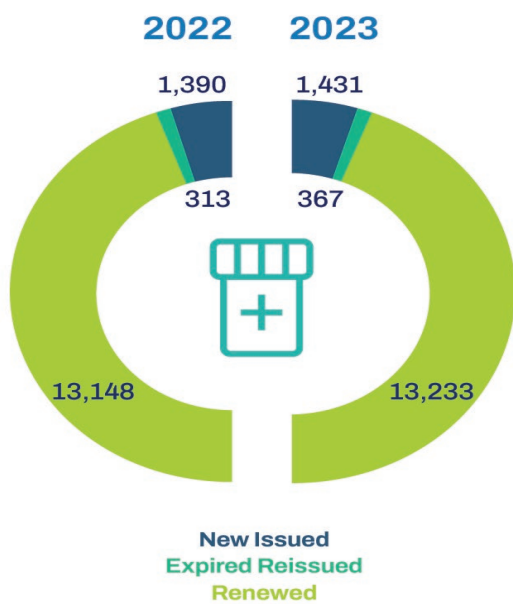
The 2023 year saw an increase in licenses for Doctors of Osteopathy, perhaps due to a growing number of graduates from osteopathic schools in Alabama. Limited licenses, primarily for physicians in residency programs, also gained, likely because of the increasing number of residency programs throughout the state.



# CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES/PAIN MANAGEMENT REGISTRATIONS ISSUED IN 2023

There were modest increases in the number of Alabama Controlled Substances Certificates issued in 2023, commensurate with the increased number of licenses issued. Pain Management registrations showed a modest increase from 2022.

## Alabama Controlled Substances Certificate



New certificates issued	1431
Expired certificates reissued	367
Certificates renewed	13233

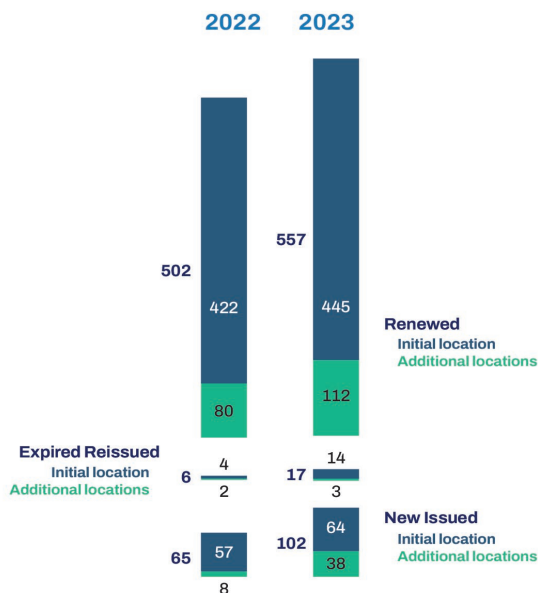
## Pain Management Services Registration

New registrations issued	102
Initial location	64
Additional locations	38

Expired registrations issued	17
Initial location	14
Additional locations	3

Registrations renewed	557
Initial location	445
Additional locations	112

## Pain Management Services Registrations



# EFFORTS TO COMBAT THE OPIOID CRISIS

## ALAHOPE



The Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council was created by Executive Order of Governor Kay Ivey in 2017. The Board is an active participant in the Council's Prescribers and Dispensers Committee, which was charged with encouraging medical schools and residency programs and other health sciences programs to include opioid education as a standard part of their curricula.

The decision was made to create an Alabama-specific online modular curriculum that could be integrated into existing curricula of Alabama health professions educational programs. The work was funded by the CDC's Overdose Data to Action grant.

After years of development as a joint project of the Jefferson County Department of Health, the UAB School of Health Professions, and the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners, the first set of modules of the Alabama Health Professionals' Opioid and Pain Management Education (ALAHOPE) curriculum concerning the treatment of substance use disorder was released in 2023. The curriculum consists of twelve modules and is hosted by the Auburn University Harrison College of Pharmacy, which also confers continuing education credits.

Each substance use disorder module confers 0.25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ and can be used towards the two biennial credits required for Alabama Controlled Substances Certificate holders, as well as the DEA's new MATE 8-hour requirement.

The joint project is in the process of developing modules for the use of opioids for pain management, and we anticipate those modules being released in 2024.

## BUPRENORPHINE SUMMIT AUGUST 2023

In August 2023, the Board, along with the Opioid Response Network and the Medical Association, jointly sponsored an educational summit, **Buprenorphine: The Path Forward**.

Summit attendees included representatives from:

- Alabama Department of Public Health
- Alabama Department of Mental Health
- Alabama Department of Corrections
- Alabama Academy of Family Physicians
- Alabama Board of Pharmacy
- Private buprenorphine treatment centers
- Other interested parties.

The goal of the summit was to communicate to federal and state officials the needs and perspectives of buprenorphine prescribers and best practices for the use of buprenorphine for the treatment of substance use disorder.

We were fortunate to have Dr. Yngvild Olsen, Director of SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, as a speaker and roundtable discussion participant. Dr. Olsen provided invaluable information from a federal perspective and encouraged input and discussion from the participants.



Dr. Olsen was eager to bring back the state-level issues and ideas to SAMHSA in their continuing efforts in combating the opioid addiction and overdose crisis. The state-level participants gained insight into the federal government's complementary efforts and initiatives.



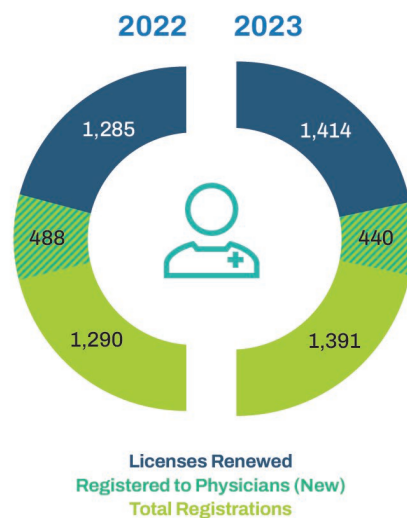


# PA/AA LICENSES/REGISTRATIONS ISSUED IN 2023

The number of Physician Assistant licenses and registrations increased from 2022, as did the number of Qualified Alabama Controlled Substances Certificates for PAs.

New PA licenses issued	197
PAs granted temporary license	11
Temporary PA licenses converted to full license	10
Temporary military PA licenses issued	2
Temporary military PA license converted to full license	1
Expired PA licenses reissued	20
Physician assistant licenses renewed	1414
Physician assistants registered to physicians (New)	440
Total physician assistant registrations	1391
PA Qualified Alabama Controlled Substances Certificates issued	75
Expired PA Qualified Alabama Controlled Substances Certificates reissued	2
PA Qualified Alabama Controlled Substances Certificates renewed	211
PA Limited Purpose Schedule II Permits issued	44
Expired PA Limited Purpose Schedule II Permits reissued	1
PA Limited Purpose Schedule II Permits renewed	164

## Physician Assistant Licenses



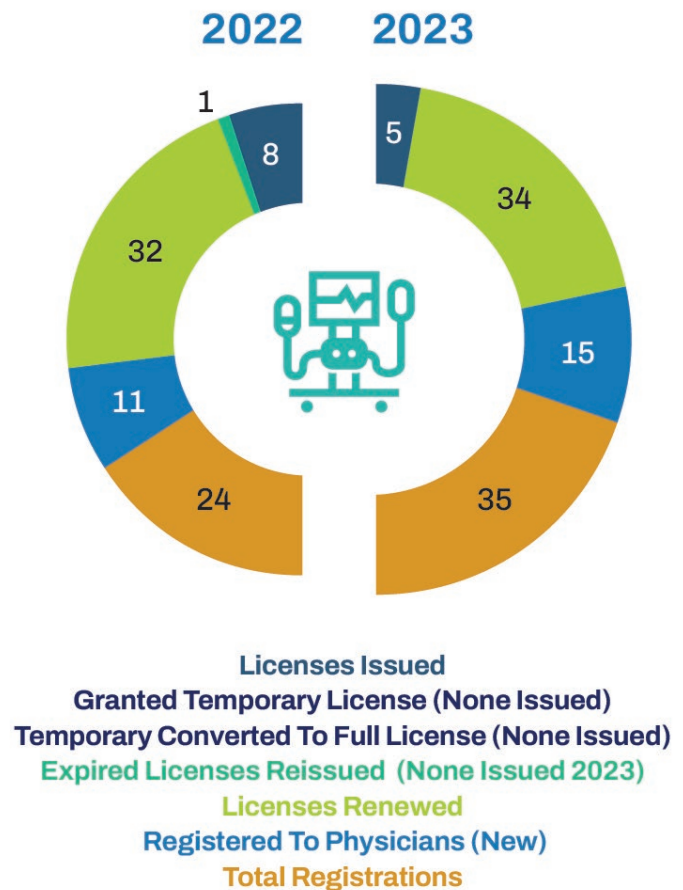
# ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANT LICENSES/REGISTRATIONS ISSUED IN 2023

There were two fewer Anesthesiologist Assistant licenses issued than in 2022, but total AA registrations to physicians increased in 2023.

AA licenses issued	5
AAs granted temporary license	0
Temporary AA licenses converted to full license	0
Expired Anesthesiologist assistant licenses reissued	0
Anesthesiologist assistant licenses renewed	34
Anesthesiologist assistant registered to physicians (New)	15
Total anesthesiologist assistant registrations	35



## Anesthesiologist Assistants (AA)





# ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSES (CRNP/CNM) AND COLLABORATIVE PHARMACY PRACTICES IN 2023

The number of collaborations between physicians and CRNP/CNMs continues to rise. A new category of collaborative practice with pharmacists did not demonstrate any growth.

## Advanced Practice Nurses (CRNP/CNM)



Collaboration registrations issued	3215
No. of physicians in collaboration	3902
QACSCs issued/reissued	452
QACSCs renewed	1223
LPSPs issued/reissued	243
LPSPs renewed	775
Collaborative and supervisory practice audits	175
Educational site visits	5
Compliance seminars	11
<b>Collaborative Pharmacy Practice</b>	<b>0</b>
Collaboration registrations issued	0
Collaboration registrations renewed	2

# EFFORTS TO EASE PHYSICIAN SHORTAGES – PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE ACT

In the ongoing endeavor to address a crucial healthcare challenge, the Alabama Legislature enacted the Alabama Physician Workforce Act of 2023. This legislation targeted the significant scarcity of physicians across the state, aiming to establish a healthcare system that guarantees accessible and consistent medical services for every resident of Alabama.

## Understanding the Imperative

The Alabama Physician Workforce Act arose from the recognition that regions with insufficient physician numbers can present obstacles to vital healthcare services. This legislation seeks to bridge this gap by ensuring that every Alabamian, irrespective of their geographical location, can readily access proficient medical care.

*“The Alabama Physician Workforce Act of 2023 represents a significant stride toward enhancing healthcare accessibility and addressing the pressing issue of physician shortages.”*

## Key Tenets of the Act

The Alabama Physician Workforce Act incorporated several pivotal provisions aimed at fortifying the physician workforce and enhancing healthcare accessibility:

- **Bridge Year Graduate Physician Permit**

This segment of the law introduced a program for physicians who graduated from an approved medical school but did not secure admission into a postgraduate or residency training program in the year following their graduation. These graduates, termed “bridge year graduate physicians,” are allowed to practice medicine under the guidance of licensed, experienced physicians.

At the culmination of the bridge year, a supervising physician will submit a comprehensive report detailing the practice, training, and instruction provided to the bridge year graduate

physician. The report will include a recommendation on whether the bridge year graduate physician would be recommended for a residency position upon reapplication. We anticipate this program commencing in early 2024.

- **Reduced Postgraduate Training Requirement**



The Act amended the requirement for additional postgraduate training for graduates of non-accredited medical schools. Previously mandating three years of training, the law now stipulates only two years of postgraduate or residency training for these graduates to qualify for an initial license. This adjustment enables qualified applicants to attain medical licenses a year earlier than under previous regulations.

- **Elimination of the “Ten Year Rule”**

The Act abolished the prior prerequisite that licensure applicants must have successfully completed a licensing examination or achieved board certification or recertification within a ten-year timeframe prior to application.

While the necessity of an approved licensing examination remains, such as the United States Medical Licensing Examination or the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination, the constraint of completion within the past ten years has been removed.

- **A Vision for a Healthier Future**

By strengthening the physician workforce, the Alabama Physician Workforce Act contributes to a healthier and more secure future for the state. It serves as a pivotal initiative to rectify physician shortages and elevate healthcare access throughout Alabama, reflecting the state’s commitment to access to medical care.



The Alabama Physician Workforce Act of 2023 represents a significant stride toward enhancing healthcare accessibility and addressing the pressing issue of physician shortages. Its multifaceted provisions underscore a comprehensive approach to ensure robust medical care delivery and a more resilient healthcare system for all Alabamians.

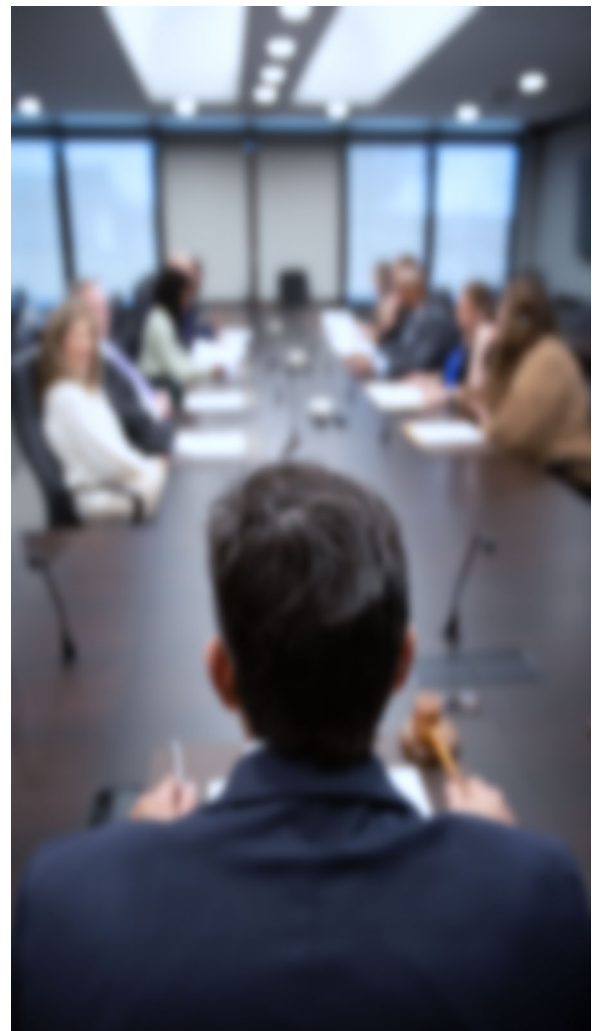
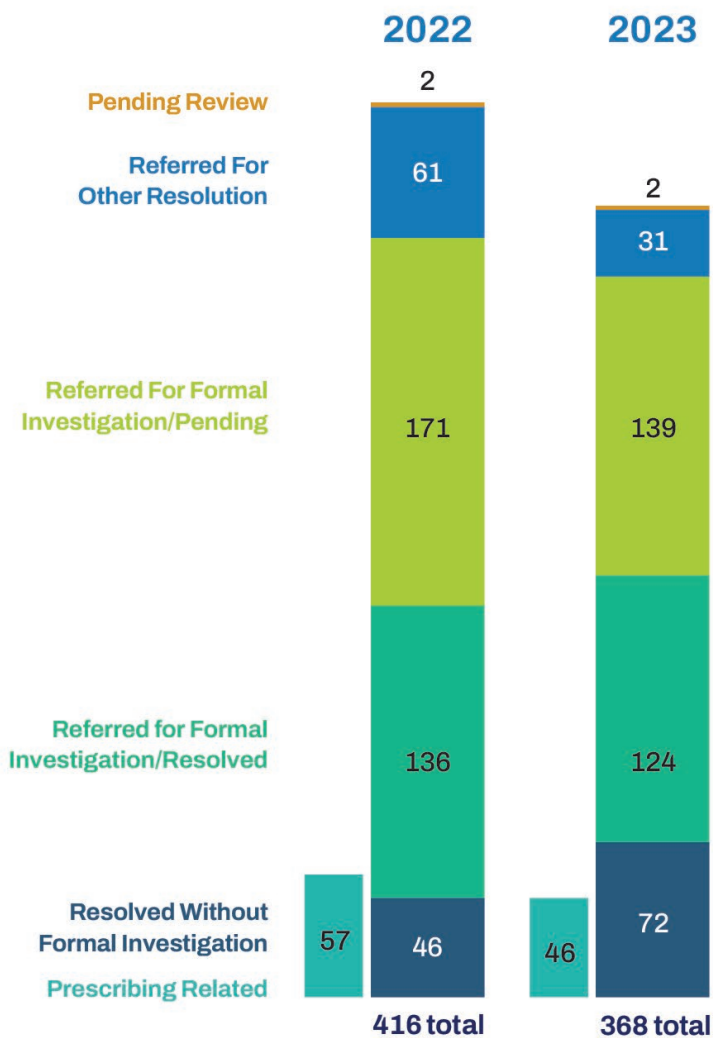


# ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Enforcement issues are investigations of complaints and other alleged misconduct reported to the Board.

Enforcement issues 2023	368
Prescribing related	46
Resolved w/o formal investigation	72
Referred for formal investigation/resolved	124
Referred for formal investigation/pending	139
Referred for other resolution	31
Pending review	2

## Enforcement Issues



# BOARD DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The Board has the authority to discipline Alabama Controlled Substances registrations, to deny or enter voluntary restrictions on certificates of qualification, and to discipline physician assistant licenses.

ACSC temporary suspension	2
Surrender	1
Pending Hearing	1
ACSC surrender	9
ACSC reinstated with restrictions/voluntary agreement	3
ACSC reinstatement denied	1
ACSC Consent Order/Settlement Agreement	3
ACSC restrictions/limitations terminated	2
QACSC denied	1
Certificate of Qualification denied	0
Certificate of Qualification surrendered	7
Voluntary Restriction entered	4
Voluntary Restriction amended	1
Voluntary Restriction terminated	5
PA licenses denied	0
PA licenses disciplined/restricted	1
AA licenses denied	0
AA licenses disciplined/restricted	0
Administrative fines/costs	5

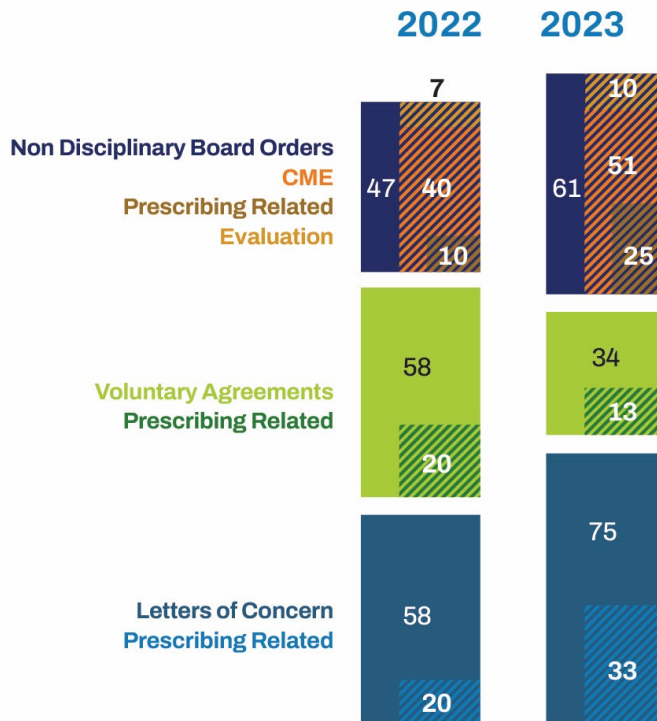


# BOARD CONFIDENTIAL ACTIONS/RESOLUTIONS

There was an increase from 2022 in the number of Letters of Concern issued in 2023, especially those related to prescribing. The number of physicians ordered to complete continuing medical education in prescribing also rose in 2023.

Voluntary Agreements amended	1
Voluntary Agreements terminated	8
Licensees' files flagged	6
Interviews conducted	42
Cases sent for expert review	4
Licensees currently monitored	367
Licensees monitored since 1990	2355
Letters of Concern	75
Prescribing Related	33
Voluntary Agreements	34
Prescribing Related	13
Non Disciplinary Board Orders	61
CME	51
Prescribing Related	25
Evaluation	10

## MD/DO Confidential Resolutions

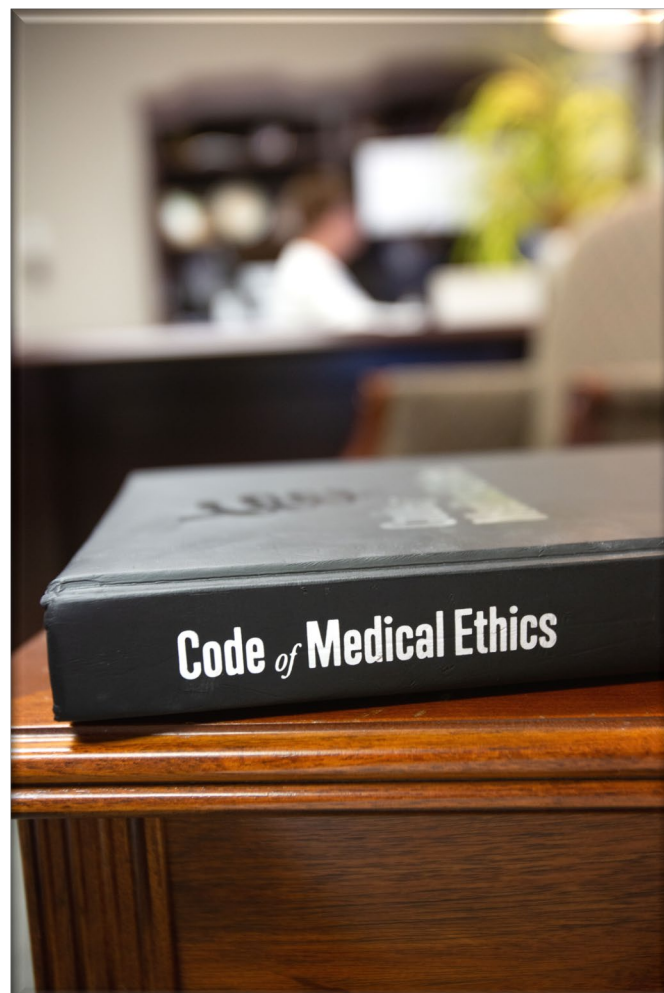




# FORMAL FILINGS WITH MEDICAL LICENSURE COMMISSION

When the Board finds evidence of a rule or law violation warranting license discipline, it files formal charges with the Medical Licensure Commission.

Admin. Complaints filed	36
Admin. Complaints/Petition for Summary Suspension	5
Revocation	1
Surrender	1
Probation	1
Hearing pending	2
Notice of Intent to Contest Reinstatement	4
Administrative fines/costs requested	29



# **BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS WELCOMES NEW LEADERS AND NEW MEMBERS**

*The Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners has new leadership and two new members.*

Dr. Max Rogers of Mobile was elected as the new Chair of the Board and Dr. Hernando Carter was elected Vice Chair on Saturday.

Dr. Rogers previously served as the Board's Vice Chair and succeeds Dr. Mark H. LeQuire, whose term as Chair expired. Dr. Rogers was born and raised in Mobile. He was commissioned into the United States Marine Corps after graduating from the Virginia Military Institute and became a fighter pilot, flying F/A-18 Hornet Strike Fighters. After his service in the Marines, he attended medical school at the University of Alabama School of Medicine. Dr. Rogers returned to Mobile in 1998 and entered private practice in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Dr. Carter is a physician practicing Internal Medicine as the Birmingham Market Medical Director for Archwell Health. He is also the founder, CEO and president of Prescription for Better Living, a non-profit organization that works to promote health careers to those from underrepresented backgrounds. Dr. Carter received his undergraduate degree in Biology from Morehouse College and his Medical Degree from the University of Alabama School of Medicine.

In addition to the change in leadership, two new members were elected to the Board: Dr. Adam C. Harrison of Cullman and Dr. William J. Schneider of Huntsville.

Dr. Harrison received his Doctor of Osteopathy in 2010 and completed his first year of medical residency at The Medical Center in Columbus, GA. He then completed his residency in Family Medicine at Huntsville Hospital through the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Harrison is now a partner at Cullman Internal Medicine. On the Board of Medical Examiners, he is filling the unexpired term of Fayette physician Dick Owens, M.D., who passed away in March.

Dr. Schneider joined the Huntsville Cardiovascular Clinic in 2011, where he treats all aspects of adult heart disease. He attended medical school at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio and completed an Internal Medicine residency at Barnes-Jewish Hospital through Washington University in St. Louis and a cardiology fellowship at the University of Louisville. Dr. Schneider is on the medical staff at Crestwood Medical Center and Huntsville Hospital.

We welcome the Board's new leaders and members as we strive to protect the health of all Alabamians," said William M. Perkins, the Executive Director of the Board.

## 2023-2024 Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners

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*Mobile*

**Hernando D. Carter, M.D.**  
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**Eli L. Brown, M.D.**  
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**Amanda J. Williams, M.D.**  
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**Paul M. Nagrodzki, M.D.**  
*Birmingham*

**Nina P. Nelson-Garrett, M.D.**  
*Montgomery*

**Pamela D. Varner, M.D.**  
*Birmingham*

## New CME Requirement for Physicians and Assistants to Physicians

Effective Jan. 1, 2025, Physician Assistants/Anesthesiologist Assistants and Supervising Physicians entering new supervised practices and Collaborating Physicians entering new collaboration agreements with CRNPs and CNMs will be required to obtain continuing medical education regarding the rules and statutes governing supervised practice in Alabama not more than 48 months prior to January 1, 2025, or within twelve months of a new registration or collaborative agreement.



However, for initial compliance, the Board has extended the look-back period to 60 months prior to January 1, 2025. Therefore, anyone completing the course within 60 months prior to January 1, 2025, will be deemed compliant with the initial education requirement. The Board is working toward providing an online course; however, at this time, the approved course is live only. Please see this link for information about the course offered on Nov. 22, 2024.



# Risk and Abuse Mitigation Strategies for Physicians

The Board recognizes that all controlled substances, including but not limited to, opiates, benzodiazepines, stimulants, anticonvulsants, and sedative hypnotics, have a risk of addiction, misuse, and diversion. It is the opinion of the Board that the best practice when prescribing controlled substances shall include medically appropriate risk and abuse mitigation strategies, which will vary from patient to patient.

Additional care should be used by practitioners when prescribing medication to a patient from multiple controlled substance drug classes.

Board rules require that every practitioner provide his or her patient with risk education prior to initiating controlled substances therapy and prior to continuing the controlled substances therapy initiated by another practitioner.

The rules also require every practitioner to utilize medically appropriate risk and abuse mitigation strategies when prescribing controlled substances. Examples of risk and abuse mitigation strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Pill counts;
- Urine drug screening;
- PDMP checks;
- Consideration of abuse-deterrent medications;
- Monitoring the patient for aberrant behavior;
- Using validated risk-assessment tools, examples of which shall be maintained by the Board; and
- Co-prescribing naloxone to patients receiving opioid prescriptions when determined to be appropriate in the clinical judgment of the treating practitioner.

The Board recognizes that the best available research demonstrates that the risk of adverse events occurring in patients who use controlled substances to treat pain increases as dosage increases. The Board has adopted the “Morphine Milligram Equivalency” (“MME”) daily standard as set out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) for calculating the morphine equivalence of opioid dosages.

The Board further adopted the “Lorazepam Milligram Equivalency” (“LME”) daily standard for calculating sedative dosing when using the Alabama Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.

For the purpose of preventing controlled substance diversion, abuse, misuse, addiction, and doctor-shopping, the Board sets forth the following requirements for the use of Alabama’s Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP):

For controlled substance prescriptions totaling less than 30 MME or 3 LME per day, physicians are expected to use the PDMP in a manner consistent with good clinical practice.

When prescribing to a patient-controlled substances of more than 30 MME or 3 LME per day, physicians shall review that patient’s prescribing history through the PDMP at least two (2) times per year, and each physician is responsible for documenting the use of risk and abuse mitigation strategies in the patient’s medical record.

Physicians shall query the PDMP to review a patient’s prescribing history every time a prescription for more than 90 MME or 5 LME per day is written, on the same day the prescription is written.

Exemptions: The Board’s PDMP requirements do not apply to physicians writing controlled substance prescriptions for:

- Nursing home patients;
- Hospice patients, where the prescription indicates hospice on the physical prescription;
- When treating a patient for active, malignant pain; or
- Intra-operative patient care.

Due to the heightened risk of adverse events associated with the concurrent use of opioids and benzodiazepines, physicians should reconsider a patient’s existing benzodiazepine prescriptions or decline to add one when prescribing an opioid and consider alternative forms of treatment.

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

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## January 2024

- Jan. 18 - Steven W. Powell, MD (MD.39044), Milton GA - the Board accepted the voluntary surrender of license
- Jan. 24 - Shakir R. Meghani, MD (MD.22917), Dothan - the Alabama Controlled Substances Certificate is reinstated in full

## February 2024

- Feb. 6 - Cameron T. Corte, MD (MD.38259), Fairhope - the license is temporarily suspended pending a hearing on the allegations

- Feb. 22 - Victor J. Bonuel, MD (MD.38778), Fairfield - the license is voluntarily surrendered
- Feb. 22 - Evann M. Herrell, DO (DO.1586), Kodak TN - the license is voluntarily surrendered
- Feb. 22 - Ludonir C. Sebastiany, MD (MD.44831), Bradenton FL - the license is voluntarily surrendered

- Feb. 28 - Rubye Washington-Moore, MD (MD.28483), Norton VA - the license is suspended

## March 2024

- Mar. 4 - Viplove Senadhi, DO (DO.1453), Montgomery - license is temporarily suspended pending a hearing on the allegations
- Mar. 12 - Edith H. G. McCreadie, MD (MD.23369), Mobile - license is reinstated to full, unrestricted status
- Mar. 27 - Richard E. Jones, III, MD (MD.19352), Northport - license is placed on probation



Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners  
Alabama Medical Licensure Commission

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### Upcoming BME Meeting Dates

May 16 • Jun 20 • Jul 18

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](http://www.albme.gov).

### Upcoming MLC Meeting Dates

May 29 • Jun 26 • Jul 24

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

## Have questions or need assistance?

### Alabama Board of Medical Examiners

**(334) 242-4116**

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### CONTACT US:

Alabama Board of  
Medical Examiners  
P.O. Box 946  
Montgomery, AL 36101

(334) 242-4116  
bme@albme.gov