



Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners  
and Medical Licensure Commission

# Medical Digest

Summer 2026

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## Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners

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## New Member of the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners



Dr. Carrie Atcheson

In April, Carrie Atcheson, MD, joined the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners.

Dr. Atcheson received her medical degree from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine and completed her anesthesiology residency at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. She has been licensed to practice in Alabama since 2020.

Currently practicing in Birmingham, Dr. Atcheson is board certified in anesthesiology and brings more than a decade of practice experience to the Board. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Dr. Atcheson as she begins her service in upholding the Board's mission to protect the health and safety of Alabama patients.



## Conclusion of Member's Term

At its April meeting, the Board recognized Dr. Amanda Williams for her outstanding service on the Board.

Throughout her tenure, Dr. Williams held numerous leadership roles while also contributing to multiple work groups and committees, consistently supporting the Board's mission and needs.

In addition, Dr. Williams's specialty in psychiatry has been an invaluable resource to the Board.



(L to R) Drs. Carter, Rogers, Williams, and Executive Director William Perkins

# Scammers Continue to Target Alabama Physicians

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Scammers continue to mail, email, fax, and call physicians claiming to be medical board investigators, FBI, DEA, and even US Customs and Border Protection agents. Tactics used by these individuals include, but are not limited to, advising the licensee they are under investigation and/or owe a fine; a package for the licensee needs to be picked up from an express delivery location; their license or permit will be suspended or revoked for failing to respond. Legitimate telephone IDs and names of agents, staff, and even Board members can easily be “spoofed” giving the appearance of legitimate communication.

Do not give these individuals any information and hang up immediately if you suspect fraudulent communication. If you do provide information, especially credit card or bank information, you should contact local law enforcement or the Attorney General and your credit card company/bank.

**Be aware that Alabama Board of Medical Examiners investigators do not notify physicians of investigations by any means other than in person except in rare cases.** When we receive a valid complaint, it is most often personally served on the physician, and the physician signs an acknowledgment of investigation while in the presence of the investigator. If you receive a contact purporting to be from the Board that seems suspicious, you can ask for their direct line and say you would like to call them back. Chances are they will hang up or provide a number that does not go to our agency.

**If you are a doctor who has been scammed out of money by someone posing as a government agent, here are the steps you should take:**

1. **Cease All Contact:** Immediately stop all communication with the scammer. Do not respond to any further calls, messages, or emails from them.
2. **Notify Financial Institutions:** Contact your bank and other financial institutions to inform them of the scam. Safeguard your accounts by changing passwords and monitoring for any suspicious activity.
3. **File a Police Report:** Report the incident to your local law enforcement agency. Provide them with all details of the scam, including any communication records and transaction details.
4. **Report to the FBI:** File a complaint with the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov). This helps the FBI track and investigate such scams.
5. **Preserve Evidence:** Keep all records related to the scam, including emails, text messages, phone call logs, and any financial transaction information. This evidence will be crucial for any investigation.
6. **Educate Yourself and Others:** Learn about common scam tactics to protect yourself in the future. Share your experience with colleagues and friends to raise awareness and prevent others from falling victim to similar scams.

**The Board will never contact licensees by phone to collect payments. All required payments to the Board will be located in the licensees Licensee Gateway account.**



# Alabama Board of Medical Examiners

## PRESCRIBING

The privilege of prescribing controlled substances in Alabama comes with the immense responsibility to protect the patient's safety as well as that of the public by preventing misuse and diversion.

**540-X-4-.06**

Requirements for prescriptions for controlled substances

**540-X-4-.05**







Dispensing physicians must register with Board

**540-X-4-.04**

Record keeping and inventory requirements for physicians

CONTACT WITH PATIENTS BEFORE PRESCRIBING	PRESCRIBING FOR WEIGHT LOSS	RISK AND ABUSE MITIGATION STRATEGIES
Board Rule 540-X-9-.11 states the policy of the Board concerning performing physical exams before prescribing medications to a patient.	Board Rules, Chapter 540-X-17, provides guidelines and standards for the use of controlled substances for weight reduction.	Board Rule 540-X-4-.09 states the guidelines and standards for mitigating the risks of addiction, misuse, and diversion.
When possible, the prescriber should personally examine the patient. The prescriber should make an informed medical judgment based on appropriate history, the circumstances, and the prescriber's training and experience.	A prescription or order must be signed on the date the medication is dispensed or the prescription given to the patient. These prescriptions may not be called in to a pharmacy. The prescribing/ordering physician must be present at the facility at the time of the prescription or order.	The guidelines apply to the prescribing of all controlled substances for all reasons, with specific requirements with regard to opioids and benzodiazepines.

## EXAMPLES OF RISK AND ABUSE MITIGATION STRATEGIES

-  Pill counts
-  Consideration of abuse-deterrent medications
-  Urine drug screening
-  Using validated risk-assessment tools
-  PDMP checks
-  Monitoring patient for aberrant behavior

### REQUIRED CME FOR ALABAMA CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES CERTIFICATE (PHYSICIANS)

Two credits of AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ in controlled substances prescribing every two years. The education must include:

- controlled substances prescribing practices
- recognizing signs of abuse or misuse, or
- prescribing for chronic pain management



**A prescriber may prescribe a legend drug, medical supplies, or a controlled substance via telehealth if the prescriber is authorized to do so under state and federal law. Be sure to review the requirements for prescribing controlled substances via telemedicine.**

This information sheet is a summary of Board guidelines. Please refer to the complete guidelines at [www.albme.gov](http://www.albme.gov), or scan the QR code.



# How the Board Reviews and Resolves Complaints

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The Board regulates medical doctors (MD), doctors of osteopathy (DO), physician assistants (PA), anesthesiologist assistants (AA), and the prescribing privileges of certified registered nurse practitioners/certified nurse midwives (CRNP/CNM) who have controlled substance prescribing privileges. The Board does not regulate psychologists, podiatrists, dentists, registered nurses, other health professionals, hospitals, nursing homes, surgical centers, or other health care facilities.

The Board has the authority to investigate complaints received against its licensees and permit holders. Complaints may be filed by patients, patient surrogates, other healthcare providers, members of the public, and the Board, itself. Complaints received may concern the quality of care provided by the licensee, prescribing issues, professionalism, etc. However, the Board has no jurisdiction over insurance reimbursement.

After a complaint is received and determined to fall within the Board's jurisdiction, investigative staff acknowledges receipt to the complainant and may request additional information if needed. Staff then contacts the licensee to obtain a response to the complaint and, when necessary, subpoenas patient records to support the investigation.

Generally, a Board investigator will arrive unannounced. However, there are times when the investigator will work with the licensee to meet at a mutually agreed time and place.

The licensee has the right to legal counsel to assist them in the investigative process.

When an investigator presents to a licensee's office, the office staff should notify the licensee immediately that the investigator is waiting. Board investigators are sworn peace officers in the State of Alabama and will have proper identification including a badge and other Board specific identification. If the licensee or office staff have any concerns as to the identification of the investigator, they should call the Board's office to verify the investigator's identity.

Once the investigation is complete, including subpoenaing records and interviewing the complainant, licensee, and other witnesses, an investigative report is prepared and presented to the Board for consideration.

While not an exhaustive list, the Board has the following options for disposition of an investigation: close the case due to no basis for action against a license or permit; issue a confidential non-disciplinary Letter of Concern to the licensee; impose assessment, remediation, or education requirements; mandate a behavioral, cognitive, or health related evaluation; send the patient records for further expert review; file charges against the licensee's permit or license, after which the licensee is afforded a due process hearing.

The complainant and licensee are notified in writing of the Board's decision.

***Board investigators are sworn peace officers in the State of Alabama and will have proper identification including a badge and other Board specific identification.***

# Retirement of Investigative Specialist and Program Manager

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*Recognizing 20 Years of Service*



Karen Silas, Program Manager

At its February 2026 meeting, the Board recognized Karen Silas, Program Manager.

Ms. Silas began her career with the Board as an Investigative Assistant. She went on to serve the Medical Licensure Commission for many years as Director of Operations before concluding her tenure with the agency as the Board's Program Manager.

During her time as Director of Operations for the Medical Licensure Commission, she played a key role in the Board and Commission's successful participation in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC). Ms. Silas served a term as Chair of the IMLC during her appointment to the IMLC Commission.

The Board proudly recognizes and celebrates Ms. Silas' many years of service.



Tammy Kelly, Investigative Specialist with Executive Director William Perkins

At its May 2026 meeting, the Board recognized Tammy Kelly, Investigative Specialist.

Ms. Kelly joined the Board in 2006 under the leadership of Executive Director Larry Dixon. In her role as an Investigative Specialist, she supported the Investigations Department by organizing and managing case files, a role requiring a close working relationship with other agency departments and Board members.

In addition, Ms. Kelly worked closely with the public intaking and processing complaints in a professional and compassionate manner.

The Board wishes Ms. Kelly all the best in her retirement.

# Office-Based Surgery Registrations

New office-based surgery rules went into effect on March 16, 2026. **If you are a physician who is currently registered with the Board for the performance of office-based surgery (OBS) in your medical practice, you are required to update your OBS registration by January 1, 2027, and provide proof of accreditation.** The Board recommends completing the new registration as soon as possible.

The new OBS registration form can be accessed through the Licensee Gateway under the “Applications” drop down menu. All currently registered physicians must complete the new online registration. Beginning **January 2027**, registration as a provider of OBS will be required annually during license renewal.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

*Q. Is approval required for each patient that is 85 or older?*

*A. No. It is not a requirement to request patient specific approval. The request to treat patients age 85 or older may be approved for certain procedures or class of procedures.*

*Q. Is approval required each time intra-peritoneal and intra-pleural procedures are performed?*

*A. No. It is not a requirement to request patient specific approval.*

*Q. Do Freestanding Emergency Departments or Ambulatory Surgery Centers fall under the OBS rules and requirements?*

*A. No. Since FEDs and ASCs are licensed and governed by the Alabama Department of Public Health, they do not fall under the OBS rules and requirements.*

## Approved Accrediting Entities

Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC)

QUAD A (Formerly the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (AAAASF))

Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC)

The Joint Commission

Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC)

The Board can approve other entities. If you are currently accredited by an organization that isn't on this list, let us know!

**Questions related to OBS can be emailed to [OBS@albme.gov](mailto:OBS@albme.gov)**

# Medical Cannabis

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**The Darren Wesley “Ato” Hall Compassion Act was passed by the Alabama Legislature in 2021. This law allows qualified Alabama physicians to recommend medical cannabis to patients. Physicians must complete the application process and receive approval from the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners prior to recommending medical cannabis to Alabama patients for specified qualifying medical conditions.**

## **AMCC Permit Eligibility Requirements | Physician must hold the following licenses/registrations:**

- Active, unrestricted Alabama medical license (no serious discipline in the past five years).
- Active, unrestricted Alabama controlled substances registration (ACSC).
- Active, unrestricted Alabama-specific DEA registration.
- Current registration to query the Alabama Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) maintained by the Alabama Department of Public Health.
- Current registration, or immediate intent to register, with the Alabama Medical Cannabis Patient Registry System established and maintained by the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission.
- Proof of completion of a Board-approved four-hour course related to medical cannabis and a passing grade on an examination.
- A list of all practice locations from which the applicant may certify or recommend a patient for the use of medical cannabis.
- Non-refundable, non-transferable initial application fee of \$300.

## **AMCC Permit Experience Requirements**

- Has been in the active practice of medicine or osteopathy for at least three years (excluding internship, residency, fellowship, or other supervised training program); or
- Has actively practiced medicine or osteopathy for at least one year (excluding internship, residency, fellowship, or other supervised training program) and is certified by a specialty board approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties or the American Osteopathic Association Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists.

- Must diagnose the patient with at least one qualifying medical condition or confirm that the patient has been medically diagnosed by a physician with at least one qualifying medical condition.
- Must establish a bona fide physician-patient relationship with the patient in an in-person visit. There is an expectation that the physician will provide care to the patient on an ongoing basis.
- Must conduct a physical examination while physically present in the same room as the patient and obtain a full assessment of the patient’s medical history.
- Any certification or recommendation, or recertification or re-recommendation of a patient for the use of medical cannabis must also occur with the registered certifying physician and the qualified patient physically present in the same room.
- Shall create and maintain a medical record that complies with Board rules.
- Determine from the patient registry whether the patient has an active registration for the use of medical cannabis.
- Submit to the patient registry the electronic certification or recommendation for treatment with medical cannabis.
- Must be available to provide follow-up care and treatment to the patient who is certified or recommended treatment with medical cannabis, including physical examinations relevant to the patient’s condition.
- May keep the records required for the certification or recommendation of medical cannabis with the patient’s other medical records and shall retain them for at least seven years.
- Must submit an annual report describing the AMCC permit holder’s observations regarding the effectiveness of medical cannabis in treating patients.

### **AMCC Permit Holders:**



## Medical Cannabis Continued

### AMCC Permit Holders May Not:

- Accept remuneration for certifying a patient from anyone but the patient for a fee not to exceed customary charges.
- Accept, solicit, or offer any form of remuneration from or to a dispensary for referring a patient to a specific dispensary.
- Offer a discount or any other item of value to a patient to use a specific registered caregiver or a specific dispensary.
- Hold a direct or indirect economic interest in a licensee (grower, transporter, dispensary, integrated facility) of the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission (AMCC).
- Serve on the Board of Directors or as an employee of a licensee (grower, transporter, dispensary, integrated facility) of the AMCC.
- Refer patients to a specific caregiver or a specific dispensary.
- Advertise in a dispensary.
- Advertise on a website, in brochures, or other media that generally describes the scope of practice of the physician as a “medical cannabis” or “medical marijuana” physician or doctor, or otherwise advertises the status of a registered certifying physician, other than stating the following: “Dr. \_\_\_\_ is qualified by the State of Alabama to certify patients for medical cannabis use under the Alabama Compassion Act.”
- Be located in the same office space as a dispensary or a dispensing site.
- Certify or recommend, or re-certify or re-recommend a patient for the use of medical cannabis unless both the physician and the patient are physically located in Alabama, and any examination, visit, or other consultation occurs while both parties are physically located in Alabama.
- Recommend cannabis for the treatment of a condition that the physician is not trained to treat with conventional medical treatment.
- Certify or recommend, or recertify or re-recommend, the use of medical cannabis to any patient who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or attempting to conceive.
- Certify or recommend, or recertify or re-recommend, the use of medical cannabis to any patient who has a condition for which cannabis is contraindicated under the current standard of care or by evidence-based research.
- A registered certifying physician is prohibited from utilizing any form of telemedicine when certifying or recommending, or recertifying or re-recommending a patient for the use of medical cannabis, or when conducting any examination associated therewith.

### Dosage Limitations of Medical Cannabis

- Medical cannabis with a potency greater than three percent (3%) tetrahydrocannabinol may not be recommended to any minor for any qualifying condition.
- The Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission will establish the maximum daily dosages for each qualifying medical condition. Certain maximums may be increased if the physician determines it is medically appropriate (not to exceed 75 mg of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) or the patient has been diagnosed with a terminal illness. The AMCC permit holder shall notify the patient that the patient’s driver’s license will be suspended.

**More information on the physician recommendation for a patient's use of medical cannabis can be found on the Board's website.**

## Learn More:



- Requirements
  - FAQs
- Education
- Resources

# Making an Impact: Our Work in Action

## Annual Meeting of the Federation of State Medical Boards

Members of the Board and Commission, along with staff, traveled to Baltimore, Maryland in April to participate in the Annual Meeting of the Federation of State Medical Boards which brings together U.S. and international medical regulators to share ideas and best practices in medical regulation.



Tiffany Seamon and Mark Spangler,  
Executive Director of the West  
Virginia Board and Chair of AIM

## Credentialing Director Honored at Annual Meeting of Administrators in Medicine

Tiffany Seamon, Credentialing Director, was awarded the Ruth Martinez Licensing Specialist Award at the Annual Meeting of Administrators in Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland.

This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated exceptional work as a licensing specialist.

## Associate General Counsel Serves on Panel at Annual Meeting of the Federation of State Medical Boards

Effie Hawthorne, Associate General Counsel, was invited to serve on a panel discussion at the Annual Meeting of the Federation of State Medical Boards addressing the impact of mandated sexual misconduct continuing medical education, sharing her expertise on this important topic.



Effie Hawthorne



Kimie Buley, Winston Jordan, Aaron Wright (OIT), Chadwick Smith (OIT), William Perkins, Chris Hart

## Artificial Intelligence Training

In May, Board and Commission staff were provided the opportunity to hear a valuable training presentation on the topic of Artificial Intelligence from Chadwick Smith, Chief Information Security Officer at the Office of Information Technology (OIT) for the State of Alabama.

# Report of Public Actions of the Medical Licensure Commission and Board of Medical Examiners



## March 2026

- March 2 - Steven M. Taylor, MD (MD. 22746), Alabaster - MLC Consent Decree assessing administrative fine and costs following the acceptance of a Joint Settlement Agreement with the Board.
- March 5 - Stephanie L. Connell, PA (PA. 919), Saraland - temporary suspension of license.
- March 11 - Stephanie L. Connell, PA (PA. 919) Saraland - temporary suspension of license is lifted; license restricted

## April 2026

- April 2 - Edward G. Witt, DO (DO. 556), Gurley - MLC Order summarily suspending license.
- April 3 - Timothy J. Ramsden, MD (MD. 53820), Greenville - MLC issues license with restrictions.
- April 7 - Marcus D. Rushing, MD (MD. 48933), Toledo, Ohio - MLC Order allowing BME to file the Bill of Costs outside the usual timeframe.
- April 13 - Kimroy S. Walters, MD (MD. 41199), Brooklyn, New York - MLC Order accepting voluntary surrender of license.

- April 24 - Cameron T. Corte, MD (MD. 38259), Magnolia Springs - MLC Order granting request to modify probationary condition placed on license.
- April 24 - Marlon C. Williamson, MD (MD. 33688), Fort Payne - MLC Consent Decree approving settlement agreement.
- April 28 - Hesham A. Hassan, MD (MD. 44644), Birmingham - MLC Order summarily suspending license.
- April 28 - Daniel A. Polansky, MD (MD. 13954), Mobile - MLC Order summarily suspending license.
- April 30 - Tommie M. Robinson, III, MD (MD. 30885), Huntsville - MLC Order accepting voluntary surrender of license.

## May 2026

- May 21 - Stephanie L. Connell, PA (PA. 919), Saraland - license restored to full, unrestricted status.
- May 27 - Steven M. Hayden, MD (MD. 13468), Las Vegas, Nevada - MLC Order denying request for limited supplementation/correction of administrative record.



Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners  
 P.O. Box 946  
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[www.albme.gov](http://www.albme.gov)

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Montgomery, AL  
 Permit No. 417

**Upcoming BME Meeting Dates**  
 July 16 | August 20 | September 17

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**  
 July 22 | August 26 | September 23

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



**@AlaMedBd**

**Have questions or need assistance?**

**Alabama Board of Medical Examiners**

- General questions | (334) 242- 4116 | [BME@albme.gov](mailto:BME@albme.gov)
- MD/DO Initial Licensure | [Credentialing@albme.gov](mailto:Credentialing@albme.gov)
- Alabama Controlled Substances Certificates | [ACSC@albme.gov](mailto:ACSC@albme.gov)
- Alabama Medical Cannabis Permits | [AMCP@albme.gov](mailto:AMCP@albme.gov)
- Advanced Practice Providers (Registration & Collaborative Agreements) | [APPDept@albme.gov](mailto:APPDept@albme.gov)
- Qualified Alabama Controlled Substances Certificates, Limited Purpose Schedule II Permits | [QACSC@albme.gov](mailto:QACSC@albme.gov)
- Office Based Surgery | [OBS@albme.gov](mailto:OBS@albme.gov)
- Lasers | [Laserreg@albme.gov](mailto:Laserreg@albme.gov)
- Continuing Medical Education | [CME@albme.gov](mailto:CME@albme.gov)
- License Verifications | [Verification@albme.gov](mailto:Verification@albme.gov)

**Medical Licensure Commission**

General questions | (334) 242 - 4153 | [MLC@almlc.gov](mailto:MLC@almlc.gov)

Interested in a career with the Board or Commission? Visit our Careers page.

