



For Immediate Release: May 2, 2012

Contact: Drew Carlson, (817) 868-4043

dcarlson@fsmb.org; www.fsmb.org

New FSMB Policy Addresses Physicians Reentering Practice After Extended Absence from Medicine

*Federation of State Medical Boards recommendations address
issues related to growing numbers of physicians seeking to reenter practice*

DALLAS – The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) House of Delegates adopted a new policy addressing patient safety and other issues related to physicians reentering clinical practice after a significant leave of absence from medicine. The policy was adopted during the FSMB’s 2012 Annual Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 28.

The [Report of the Special Committee on Reentry to Practice](#) encourages state medical boards to develop a standardized process for physicians and physician assistants to demonstrate their competence prior to reentering practice after an extended absence from clinical practice.

“Physicians may take a temporary extended leave from practice for many reasons, including personal lifestyle decisions, child caring, or to pursue research, administrative or other professional interests not involving the clinical practice of medicine,” said Humayun Chaudhry, DO, president and CEO of the FSMB. “Regardless of the reasons for a prolonged interruption in clinical practice, it is critical for state medical boards to address physician and physician assistant reentry as part of their mission to ensure patient safety.”

Ensuring physicians are qualified to reenter practice after a period of extended clinical inactivity is a complex undertaking with implications for educational, testing, monitoring and regulatory processes, Dr. Chaudhry said.

To address these complexities, the FSMB's Special Committee on Reentry to Practice developed 12 Reentry Guidelines to provide medical boards with a framework of common standards and conceptual processes for physician and physician assistant reentry. The guidelines include:

- Education and Communications Issues
- Determining Fitness to Reenter Practice
- Mentoring Practitioners Who Want to Reenter the Workforce
- Improving Regulation of Licensed Practitioners Who Are Clinically Inactive
- The Relationship between Licensure and Specialty Certification

Additionally, the policy notes that medical boards should be aware that physician reentry may offer a means of addressing the anticipated national physician shortage.

“For a variety of reasons, including the economic downturn, many state boards are reporting an increasing number of physicians seeking to reenter clinical practice,” Dr. Chaudhry said. “Helping these physicians get back to patient care in an efficient manner, within a framework that ensures public protection, could provide an additional flow of physicians to help ease our national shortage.”

The *Report of the Special Committee on Reentry to Practice* is available on the FSMB website at www.fsmb.org.

###

About the FSMB

The FSMB is a national non-profit organization representing all medical boards within the United States and its territories that license and discipline allopathic and osteopathic physicians and, in some jurisdictions, other health care professionals. It assists these state and territorial medical boards as they go about their mandate of protecting the public's health, safety and welfare. The FSMB leads by promoting excellence in medical practice, licensure, and regulation.