

Arizona Board of Medical Examiners

Fiscal Year 1999-2000
Annual Report

A Retrospective of Year Two of
the Three-Year Strategic Plan

Arizona State Board of Medical Examiners

Fiscal Year 1999-2000 Annual Report

A Retrospective of Year Two of the Three-Year Strategic Plan

After completing its most productive and successful fiscal year in more than a decade, the Arizona State Board of Medical Examiners is pleased to present its FY99-00 annual report. The fiscal year was highlighted by a monumental effort from the Board and staff to build a solid infrastructure that would support all Board programs well into the future. In FY98-99, the Board embarked on a three year transformation plan to cure deficiencies as identified in the Auditor General's 1998 report and *Building a Better BOMEX*. This report addresses year two of that plan. The goal in year two was to create and fine-tune policies and procedures for greater efficiency and public protection. The result has been a precedent setting year with measurable results.

This annual report contains:

- An Executive Summary
- Positive Performance Reviews
- An Overview of the Agency
- Detailed Enforcement Initiatives
- Effective Compliance Program Monitoring
- Public Information Advances
- Legislative Enhancements
- Improved Licensing & Renewal Processes
- Budget 2000: Investments for the Future
- A Look Ahead to Year Three

Executive Summary

Maintaining public protection is the primary goal of the Board

The agency's dedication to improving the investigation and adjudication processes resulted in a record number of disciplinary actions taken (97) and record productivity by the Board (1,016 cases reviewed). The combination of Board and staff training, quality investigations, and more effective case preparation and presentation contributed to increased continuity and consistency in Board actions.

In addition to the record number of disciplinary actions, the Board took more severe actions this fiscal year and removed nineteen physicians from practice. Since the institution of a quality Board member training program, the Board has strengthened its unity and productivity.

Great strides were made in improving public access to information. The agency's web site is now one of the best in the country with comprehensive physician profiles and Board information. Arizona is one of just two states in the country to post the full text of Board disciplinary orders on its web site. Public access to information has never been better. The efforts to create a web-centered environment are just beginning to take full effect.

In year three, the Board will focus on reducing the investigative caseload allocation that has plagued the Board for over ten years. The problems that persisted for the better part of the last decade are steadily being corrected.

The most important aspect of our success is the human factor. BOMEX Board members and staff are an incredibly dedicated, talented, resourceful, and energized group of public servants.

As we continue to make improvements, it is our promise to stay focused on our most important goal of protecting the public.

Positive Performance Reviews

BOMEX receives positive performance reviews

BOMEX received favorable performance reviews for FY99-00 from the Public Citizen's Health Research Group, the Federation of State Medical Boards, the National Practitioner Data Bank, and the Arizona Auditor General's Office.

➤ **Public Citizen's Health Research Group April 2000 Report:**

- Arizona improved 33% in the national ranking of serious disciplinary actions taken by state medical boards, moving to 21st in 1999 from 38th in 1998.
- The BOMEX web site was acclaimed as "user-friendly" and received a solid "B" grade in a survey of state medical board web sites. All of the web site improvements recommended by the report were immediately implemented.

➤ **Federation of State Medical Boards April 2000 Report:**

Arizona was ranked fifth in total board actions and seventh in prejudicial actions against in-state physicians among 35 medical boards of similar size.

➤ **National Practitioner Data Bank 1990-1999:**

Arizona was ranked second in the country for most practice restrictions per 1,000 physicians and ninth in the country for licensure actions per 1,000 physicians.

➤ **Arizona Auditor General Review:**

The report lauds the Board for curing three of five audit findings in less than one year.

- *Complaint Investigations*
 - BOMEX has significantly improved the quality of its complaint investigations.
 - BOMEX has since developed complaint investigation policies and procedures that will result in more thorough investigations.
- *Board Established Compliance Monitoring Program*
 - BOMEX has developed an appropriate compliance monitoring program.
 - BOMEX's new compliance program fully implements previous recommendations.
- *Board Vacancies No Longer Problematic*
 - The Board no longer experiences difficulties due to Board vacancies.
 - In 1999, the Board successfully sought statutory amendments to help alleviate this problem.

Overview of the Agency

Board and staff are active in transformation plan

By statute, the Arizona State Board of Medical Examiners' primary duty is to protect the public from unlawful, incompetent, unqualified, impaired or unprofessional practitioners of allopathic medicine through the licensure, regulation, discipline, and rehabilitation of physicians in Arizona.

BOARD MEMBERS

Board Officers

Ram R. Krishna, M.D., Chair
Tim B. Hunter, M.D. Vice-Chair
Patrick N. Connell, M.D., Secretary

Physician Members

Richard H. Carmona, M.D., MPH, FACS
Pamela Powers, M.D.
Edward Sattenspiel, M.D., FACOG
Edward Schwager, M.D., FAAFP
William Waldo, M.D., FACS

Nursing Board Member

Debra C. Barnes, R.N., ESN, NP

Public Members

Ronnie R. Cox, Ph.D.
Honorable Becky Jordan
Sharon B. Megdal, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Claudia Foutz

The Board consists of 11 governor-appointed members and 1 Board of Nursing representative who dedicate hundreds of hours each year reviewing cases and developing policy for the agency. Eight of the appointed members are physicians and three are public representatives. Fiscal year 1999 was marked by intensive training provided through regulatory association workshops, the Attorney General's offices of the Solicitor General and Licensing and Enforcement Section on issues of open meeting laws, disciplinary processes, licensing and regulation. Training was supported through the offering of a comprehensive Board Policy Manual, the first created in the history of the Board. Through a Board planning session, the course for disciplinary improvements provided the main goal for the Board's second year of transformation.

About the Board leadership...

Ram R. Krishna, M.D., a Yuma orthopedic surgeon, and physician member, appointed in 1994, has led the Board as Chairman for the first two years of transformation. In May he received the Arizona Medical Association Distinguished Service Award for his hard work in turning around BOMEX. He is credited, through his leadership, with guiding the agency to numerous improvements in the

disciplinary process, greater efficiency at Board meetings, and an increased level of public protection. **Tim B. Hunter, M.D.**, the Board's Vice Chairman and physician member, appointed in 1996, is a tenured professor and Vice Chairman of the Department of Radiology at the University of Arizona. Featured in Who's Who in Medicine and Healthcare, Dr. Hunter, along with two other physicians, was awarded a patent for a digital mammography apparatus. A prolific author and speaker, Dr. Hunter is a member of the distinguished society of Gastrointestinal Radiologists, an organization that limits its membership to those who have published significant works in gastrointestinal radiology. **Patrick Connell, M.D.**, the Board's Secretary and physician member, is an emergency department staff physician and part time attending at Maricopa Medical Center. He is President of Maryvale Emergency Physicians, Ltd., Medical Director of Healthwaves, Inc., a corporate wellness company and Councilor of the Arizona College of Emergency Physicians. A seasoned leader and volunteer in the Healthcare community, Dr. Connell is credited for leading the legislative initiatives that streamlined administrative processes resulting in reducing timeframes for adjudicating cases.

About the Executive Director...

Claudia Foutz was appointed Executive Director in May 1998. She led the staff in a three-year transformation plan to bring the agency into 21st century operational thinking and performance. She is known throughout the regulatory community for her dynamic approach to organizational change.

Overview of the Agency

Her ability to create an agency wide vision and challenge staff to achieve unprecedented levels of performance are hall marks of her nineteen years of leadership experience in California and Arizona state government agencies and private associations. Legislative, healthcare, and law enforcement groups have formally recognized Ms. Foutz for her forward-thinking, results-oriented management style.

Board Legal Advisor...

In late 1999, the Board requested that the Attorney General assign a full-time attorney to serve as the Board's independent counsel. In May 2000, **Richard Albrecht** was assigned to the Board. Mr. Albrecht has been with the Attorney General's Office for 15 years. For the past ten years, he has held various positions in the Liability Management Section, defending the state from liability claims. While there, he supervised a litigation unit and defended numerous complaint cases on his own. As the agency's legal advisor, he will strive to provide the Board with consistent and well-reasoned legal advice that will assist the agency in meeting its evolving and challenging obligations.

What the staff says...

Staff recognizes that deciding whether to deny an applicant a license or to take one away are among the most difficult decisions the Board must make. They further understand that to help ensure that these decisions are carefully and fairly made, the Board must have adequate information and must follow certain laws and rules. Staff respect and applaud the Board for making the best decisions, often under difficult circumstances. Staff has built on the strategic goals and the agreed upon direction by developing their own set of values, goals, objectives, and behaviors for the future.

Employees find their work at BOMEX to be challenging, rewarding, and enjoyable. The agency's Executive Director has set a management philosophy that supports an interactive management system. All employees know that they play an important role in this process and feel as though they are encouraged to make suggestions for improvement. Employees take pride in creating new ways to communicate to the public. All staff agree that an informed public is a better-protected public.

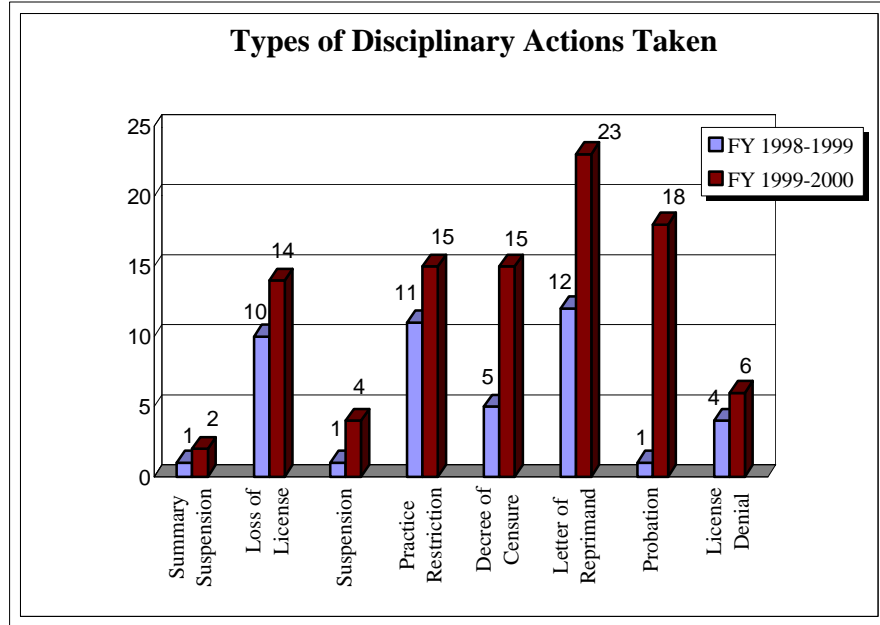
Enforcement

Record number of disciplinary actions taken

The most critical component for any state medical board is protecting the public through quality enforcement. Year two of the three-year plan for *Building a Better BOMEX* was highlighted by numerous

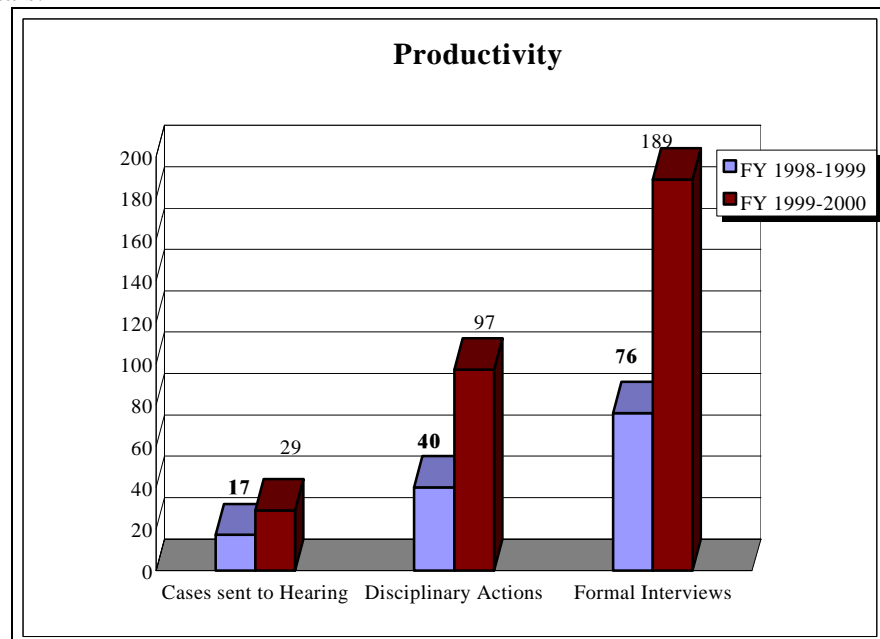
improvements to the investigative process. This led to a record number of disciplinary actions taken and physicians removed from practice.

The number of disciplinary actions more than doubled over last year. In FY98-99, the first year of transformation, the Board took 40 disciplinary actions. FY99-00 showed a record 97 disciplinary actions taken.



Agency productivity increased

Productivity increased during FY99-00 with the Board opening 800 new investigative cases, closing 769 cases, conducting 189 Formal Interviews to address 234 complaints and referring 29 cases to the Office of Administrative Hearings for disciplinary action. Each of these categories reflected an increase over FY98-99 totals.



Enforcement

Triage system prioritizes workload

The combination of quality investigations and effective case preparation and presentation resulted in better Board decisions. The establishment of a triage system for assessing case severity helps prioritize workload, while an 8-step review of each case provides superior quality assurance. The 8-step review includes:

- Investigator
- Medical Consultant
- Investigation Supervisor
- Medical Consultant Supervisor
- Enforcement Administrator
- Assistant Director Regulation
- Executive Director
- Lead Board Member

Investigators now have employee manuals that contain policies and procedures, a strategic plan, and protocols. A standardized training program was created that includes programs for improving communication, work efficiency, case preparation, and legal issues.

These educational tools help not only the existing investigative staff, but have made training new investigators much faster and easier.

Additional resources reduce caseload for investigators

During the past two years of *Building a Better BOMEX*, the agency's first responsibility was to address investigation quality. The essential keys to solving this decade old problem include investigator training, experience and staffing. Trained, experienced investigators were recruited and hired to provide higher quality investigations. Caseload per investigator still remains one of the biggest and longest standing challenges for the agency. In FY98-99 a total of 1,142 cases equated to each investigator handling a caseload of 163; larger than can reasonably be managed by one person. FY99-00 saw an increase in cases to 1,163, however additional investigator positions were granted by the legislature to address the staffing problem. Three additional investigator positions were added July 1, 2000 to address the caseload issue. This will result in a caseload per investigator of 116 cases. Reducing caseload, without compromising quality, is now the primary objective for the upcoming year.

New initiatives in assessment

The Board has a responsibility to evaluate physicians for their mental and physical ability to practice safely in Arizona. Physician assessment enables the Board to make informed decisions about a physician's ability to practice beyond the scope of the specific issues of a case. If a physician makes an error in judgment, a professional practice or professional skills and knowledge assessment will help determine if it was an isolated incident or part of a bigger problem.

Enforcement

Arizona currently uses two assessment tools, the Special Purpose Examination (SPEX) and the Post Licensure Assessment System (PLAS) and is currently evaluating a third. Arizona is one of the first states in the country to begin using PLAS, recently created by the Federation of State Medical Boards and National Board of Medical Examiners to evaluate physicians.

➤ **Special Purpose Examination (SPEX)**

SPEX is a computer-administered examination with approximately 420 multiple-choice questions that assess knowledge required of all physicians, regardless of specialty. It is used by the Board to determine basic competency issues.

➤ **Post-Licensure Assessment System (PLAS)**

PLAS is a new comprehensive system used to profile a physician's clinical performance and competency. The PLAS system utilizes computer based multiple-choice questions, computer based patient simulations, standardized patients, structured oral examinations, chart simulated recall interviews and other established methods of evaluation.

New disciplinary actions lead to swifter and more severe action

During this fiscal year the Board expanded disciplinary options, including stayed revocations, consent agreements to not practice, interim consent agreements not to practice or with a restriction on the practice, and disciplinary action clauses within probationary orders. Using these actions contributed significantly to the Board's ability to double disciplinary actions over this last year. Additionally, it has provided a means to take swifter and more severe action against repeat offenders.

- **A Stay of Revocation** puts the physician on notice that any repeat or future violations could result in immediate revocation. This expedites the process of sending a case to formal hearing to rehear an entire case for license revocation.
- **Consent Agreements** to not practice are used to immediately remove physicians from practice who may be incompetent, impaired or a threat to the public. They eliminate the necessity of having the Board quickly hold a summary suspension hearing and refer the doctor to a formal administrative hearing.
- **An Interim Consent Agreement** may be used during the course of an investigation to provide immediate public protection through an agreement not to practice, a practice restriction or to order a physician to undergo an evaluation assessment or testing or to obtain rehabilitation prior to a final Board decision.
- **Disciplinary Action Clauses** include stayed suspensions and license surrenders. Disciplinary action clauses are used in conjunction with probation as a means to enact automatic disciplinary action if the probation is violated. They provide immediate protection to the public if a physician violates a probationary order.

Enforcement

Executive director delegated authorities reduces adjudication timeframes

In August 1999, the Board adopted substantive policy statements that delegated a number of administrative responsibilities to the executive director. These delegated authorities removed a number of obstacles that hindered the Board's ability to take swift disciplinary action to protect the public. They also removed a large portion of the administrative workload from the Board to allow it to focus on policy and disciplinary issues. Affected parties may appeal any of the Executive Director's actions to the Board except consent agreements.

At each regularly scheduled meeting, the executive director is required to report to the Board the number of delegated actions. During FY99-00 these actions resulted in:

Require evaluations and investigation interviews	68
Refer cases to the Board for formal interview	102
Grant uncontested requests for inactive status and cancellation of a license	244
Enter into a consent agreement	4
Directly refer subsequent, related cases to formal hearing	1
Dismiss complaints	7
Deny licenses	6

Using the administrative delegation of referring cases directly to formal interview results in a timesaving of approximately 60 days per case, or a savings of approximately 6,120 days in FY99-00. This delegated authority streamlines the adjudication time process by decreasing the number of times the physician must appear before the board and the number of times the Board must review the case.

Consent Agreements have been initiated immediately when there is a potential danger to the public. These orders require physicians to obtain testing or undergo evaluations, or may restrict their practice while Board staff continues its investigation. This delegated authority eliminates the need to call an emergency board meeting when a physician poses a potential danger/threat to the public. This also reduces time in that the physician does not have to appear before the board to address the complaint, and then return to the next Board meeting for the Board's vote on the drafted order.

Another delegated authority allows the executive director to grant uncontested requests for inactive status and cancellation of a license. This process saves from 30 to 60 days per incident because these matters are no longer required to go to the Board for approval.

Compliance

Compliance program increases public protection

The compliance program plays a vital role in the enforcement effort. Many of the enforcement tools such as suspensions, probations, drug rehabilitation programs, and practice reviews would have minimal impact without full-time compliance officers monitoring physicians year round. Prior to 1998 investigators also performed the tasks of monitoring physician compliance with Board orders. This was ineffective because it took time away from their investigation of complaints against physicians, and did not allow full attention to compliance issues.

Since the inception of the compliance program in 1998, public protection has continually increased, allowing the Board to more effectively monitor physicians. Furthermore, the creation of the compliance program enabled investigators to devote more time to investigating new complaints.

Compliance		
	FY98-99	FY99-00
Total cases as of 6/30/00	140	166
Compliant/Completed Probation	54	31
Non-compliant cases	23	10

At the end of FY99-00, the Board had three professionally trained compliance officers who collectively have more than sixty years experience with investigative, medical and state/federal regulatory affairs. At the close of the Fiscal Year the Compliance program was actively monitoring 166 physicians, 26 more than at the end of FY98-99. As a result, FY99-00 saw increased compliance with Board orders by licensees, with the number of physicians who were not in compliance reduced by 57 per cent over FY98-99.

Public Awareness

BOMEX web site one of the best in the country

Proactive education of the public is one of the best ways to improve public protection. The agency has made significant investments in public awareness to provide comprehensive and useful information about Arizona physicians to the community.

One of the biggest areas of improvement has been the expansion of the BOMEX web site. Among state medical boards, the BOMEX web site is now one of the best in the country with comprehensive physician profiles that include disciplinary histories, educational background and office information. The full text of Board orders is now available on the web site so the public can access important details about disciplinary actions which have been final since August 7, 1999. Arizona was the second state in the country to begin providing this information.

Physician Profile

- Disciplinary actions
- Non-disciplinary actions within the last five years
- Number of open investigations
- Number of cases dismissed within the last five years
- Full text of Board orders
- Chronological listing of Board disciplinary actions
- License status
- Education and training history
- Office address and phone number

Board Information

- Physician & physician assistant statutes, rules, and substantive policy statements
- Licensing information
- Board meeting highlights
- Complaint forms and informative brochures that can be downloaded
- Fee schedule
- Meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes
- Definitions of Board actions
- Employment opportunities

The Board's web site also includes valuable information about the Board's activities, consumer alerts, meeting schedules, laws, fees, and meeting summaries. It also includes a section with procedures and forms to download. Arizona citizens currently have the ability to download complaint forms on-line and will soon be able to file a complaint electronically. The web site is easily accessible at www.docboard.org/bomex.

Public Awareness

Furnishing public information is a vital agency service

One of the many ways BOMEX educates the public is through media relations. A full-time public relations coordinator position was added to disseminate information to the public via the web site, press releases, media kits, interviews, and printed materials. The public relations coordinator also serves as a citizen's advocate helping the public obtain important information and voice their concerns about BOMEX and the medical community.

The agency responds to and provides information to over 45,000 requests for public information. In addition to providing protection to the public through disciplinary actions and licensing quality healthcare providers, furnishing accurate and timely information is the second most vital service the agency provides. The addition of a call center and toll free number has made public access to information easier with better information being disseminated. A statewide toll-free number (877-255-2212) was added for citizens who do not have access to the Internet and live outside the area.

Type of Information Request	Fiscal Year 1999-2000
License verifications	6,192
Public information	25,292
Public record requests	624
Public e-mails	750
Physician profiles (Fax and e-mail)	11,208
Other	816

BOMEX staff was also actively involved in speaking engagements, conventions, workshops, and other government agency activities to promote the services of BOMEX.

Legislative & Policy Changes

Legislative changes lead to increased public protection

Year two of *Building a Better BOMEX* was highlighted by a number of significant legislative and policy changes that improved public protection and streamlined administrative processes. Most notable was the passage of a consumer protection bill that added new statutes to curb harmful Internet prescribing, mandated medical record retention, and established a probationary license for new doctors. These bills specifically provided for the following:

- ***Retention of Medical Records*** — Arizona is one of a few states that have requirements for the retention of medical records. Physicians are now required to keep patient records for at least seven years for adults and three years after a child's eighteenth birthday.
- ***Internet Prescribing*** — Online prescriptions have become increasingly popular. Some patients are being prescribed drugs without ever visiting a doctor. Arizona doctors are now required to conduct a physical examination and make a diagnosis before prescribing any medication. Arizona was one of only four states to take the initiative to regulate the increasing number of drug prescriptions over the Internet.
- ***Public Representation*** — Nine of the Board's 12 members represent the health care industry, including one registered nurse representing the Board of Nursing. The registered nurse position will soon be replaced with by a governor's appointee.
- ***Malpractice Reporting*** — Previously, only plaintiff's attorneys reported malpractice information to BOMEX. Healthcare insurers are now also required to report medical malpractice information.
- ***Licensing Processes*** — Probationary licenses can be issued for doctors with a handicap or limited ability and temporary licenses for out-of-state doctors performing pro-bono work for charity. Doctors may also surrender their license, if they admit to violations.
- ***Rehabilitative, Retraining and Assessment Programs*** — BOMEX obtained additional authority to order doctors to undergo additional training and assessments to protect the public.
- ***Physician Profile*** — While BOMEX has taken the lead in reporting physician profiles, there has never been a penalty for erroneous reporting of information. A fine of up to \$1000 will be issued for each piece of erroneous information reported to BOMEX.
- ***Medical Assistants*** — The Board adopted rules that establish training requirements and the activities medical assistants are permitted to carry out under the direct supervision of a physician or physician assistant.

Board staff took an active role in seeking support for legislation from associations, the public, legislators, and the governor's office. Meetings and stakeholder questionnaires were used for constituent outreach.

Licensing & Renewals

Licensing and renewals process streamlined

Licensing & Renewals performs an important role in the continued regulation of physicians. The function of this department is to provide convenient friendly services to licensees and applicants, while holding Arizona physicians to on-going high standards.

Fiscal year 1999-2000 was highlighted by a number of administrative changes that streamlined the licensing and renewal process, gaining greater efficiency, validity and urgency. Staff resources were re-aligned and printed materials were utilized to provide more efficient assistance to licensees and applicants. Duplicated processes were eliminated.

Category	FY98-99	FY99-00
Number of licensees	14,615	14,892
Number of new licenses issued	806	930
Number of renewals processed	14,237	14,457
Number of license denials	4	6
Licenses suspended due to non-renewal and pending investigation	14	14
Delinquent renewals	105	71
Expired for non-renewal	373	227

Licensing and renewal turnaround times improved from previous years and for the first time in many years, the use of temporary employees during the renewal period were eliminated, shifting resources to other vital programs. Applicants are currently able to ask questions on-line about their application status by sending an e-mail to questions@bomex.org. This less burdensome process has been extremely well received by the physician community.

The number of licensed physicians continues to increase by approximately 10%. Due to program improvements, delinquent renewals have declined to less than 1% and license expirations have decreased by 8%.

Budget 2000: Investments for the Future

Administrative changes move BOMEX into the future

Major administrative improvements were implemented at BOMEX in FY99-00. Much of the focus was on investments in infrastructure for long-term prosperity and technological advances.

A one-time budget increase of \$576,100 was allocated for agency reconfiguration. The remaining budget was re-aligned to gain higher utilization of existing resources, including a \$109,100 legal counsel increase to handle the increased amount of disciplinary actions taken by the Board.

	FY98-99	FY99-00
<i>Full-time employee positions</i>	<i>44.5</i>	<i>49.5</i>
Personal services	1,393,900	1,550,600
Employee related expenditures	287,800	317,900
Professional and outside services	749,000	777,100
Travel in-state	115,800	50,300
Travel out-of-state	17,200	8,800
Other operating expenditures	574,100	475,100
Equipment	270,600	63,000
Operating Subtotal	3,408,400	3,242,800
Attorney General – legal fees	208,700	317,800
Examinations	3,100	16,500
Agency reconfiguration	0	576,100
Total	3,620,200	4,153,200

In May 2000, BOMEX relocated to larger facilities in Scottsdale. The new office provided adequate work space, boosted morale and created a more professional work atmosphere. The additional space has also provided much-needed room for an expanded filing system and is now supported by an infrastructure that will accommodate new technology expansions.

Improvements were made to the accounting processes to allow for more efficient and successful collection of outstanding debt. Furthermore, these improvements allow for more effective tracking and monitoring of the agency's financial information.

A Look Ahead to Year Three

Budget authority gives way to the electronic office

Major budget authority to invest in further technology marked FY99-00. The agency received spending authority to make significant improvements to its business processes through extensive technology updates. The goal is to continue building on the web-centered environment and achieve an exclusively electronic office through document imaging.

The agency is beginning to utilize document imaging, already placing Board Orders on the website for public access. BOMEX is also in the final stages of preparation for distributing case materials to Board members on CD-ROM prior to meetings. The CD-ROMs will greatly improve efficiency during Board meetings and case reviews prior to the meetings.

Technological Improvements
➤ All BOMEX services on-line
➤ Completely interactive website
➤ Expanded website physician profiles
➤ Personalized complaint tracking
➤ On-line applications and renewals
➤ Agency-wide document imaging

The next step in document imaging will involve the transfer of nearly all office documents and procedures onto the network. All of the internal processes will be refined and automated wherever possible to achieve maximum efficiency. Record keeping will become less burdensome and the quality of work will improve.

Through a well thought out business plan, action is being taken to further modernize the web site so it will be completely interactive, similar to award-winning private sector web sites. Some of the new information on the web site will include physician malpractice and criminal history information. In addition, the system is being designed to allow complainants to check the status of their complaints during the course of the investigation.

The Board is looking beyond the immediate future by transferring all of its services in the licensing, renewal, compliance, and enforcement departments online. The Board obtained budget authority in the amount of \$500,000 to move to an e-licensing system, and is currently involved in developing that segment of the web site.

Applicants will soon be able to use interactive menus to apply and pay for a medical license. The service will be expanded to include the ability to track the status of a license application in its various stages.

The renewal process will become more efficient with e-mail reminders, on-line renewal forms, and on-line payments. This will eliminate a large portion of the work needed to process over 15,000 renewal forms. Through this web site expansion, BOMEX will become the first professional licensing agency in Arizona to provide on-line renewals and applications.

BOMEX will release a request for proposal (RFP) for document imaging services in August 2000. Document imaging is already being used to scan disciplinary orders to be viewed on the web site. Through document imaging, a CD-ROM will replace cumbersome Board books so Board members can use interactive agendas and electronic documents on a laptop.

A Look Ahead to Year Three

Our promise for the future

The agency is dedicated to continue making improvements at BOMEX to create a safer Arizona for everyone. Through the efforts of hardworking individuals, the Board has and will continue to succeed in its goal of protecting the citizens of this State of Arizona.

Next year promises to be as aggressive as this past fiscal year. In addition to technological improvements, staff is working hard to create rules to ensure all Board policy and statutory requirements are clearly understood, defined and articulated. This means that we will not hold licensed physicians responsible for any misconduct not defined in statute, rule or substantive policy statement.

We strive to stay ahead of the complex and growing healthcare industry. The Board will continue to have an active dialog with organized medicine and the public to ensure the balance between public protection, free market mechanisms and due process.

We look forward to reporting the even better news in next year's annual report. The culmination of our remarkable three-year turnaround will surpass all expectations for *Building a Better BOMEX*.