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State Medical Board Leaders Make Progress Towards an Interstate Compact for Physician Licensure

(Eules, Texas, Nov. 26, 2013) – Representatives of state medical boards from around the country announced today that they have moved closer to a new option for medical licensing that would speed up the process of issuing licenses for physicians who wish to practice in multiple states.

During a two-day meeting hosted by the Federation of State Medical Boards in Washington, D.C., Nov. 12-13, state board executives and policy experts continued to work out key details of the proposed system, known as the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. Under the new system, physicians interested in practicing in multiple states would be able to receive a license in each state and be under the jurisdiction of the state medical board where the patient is located at the time of the medical interaction.

Participating state medical boards would retain their licensing and disciplinary authority but would agree to share information and processes essential to the licensing and regulation of physicians who practice across state borders. Participation in an interstate compact would be voluntary, for both states and physicians.

The new interstate compact system is expected to significantly reduce barriers to the process of gaining licensure in multiple states, helping facilitate licensure portability and telemedicine while widening access to health care by physicians, particularly in underserved areas of the nation.

A drafting committee of the Interstate Compact Taskforce (ICT) is shaping the compact's basic terms of understanding, which will be shared with state medical boards and other stakeholders for further feedback and comment. During the Washington, D.C., meeting, the drafting group discussed key concepts such as physician eligibility, information-sharing between boards, disciplinary responsibilities and other factors necessary for consideration in a compact. Experts in the development of interstate compacts are assisting with the process.

“We are making very good progress in this effort and expect to have a draft compact circulating to the state medical board community very soon,” said Jon V. Thomas, MD, MBA, a member of the Interstate Compact Taskforce and Chair of the FSMB. “We have put an emphasis on adopting the best practices of other successful state compacts during this process, while at the same time building in new, unique features that will make our compact distinctive and well suited to the needs of patients, physicians and state medical boards.”

“The approach under consideration would allow our compact to evolve with changes in health care delivery as needed, while maintaining the state-based foundation of medical licensure,” Dr. Thomas said.

The ICT anticipates having draft language ready for wider review in early 2014.

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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. For more information, please visit www.fsmb.org.