Experiences of U.S. Medical Regulatory Authorities During COVID-19

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Federation of State Medical Boards

- Non-profit national organization, established in 1912
- Represents all 70 state and territorial licensing boards in the U.S.A. that license physicians (MD and DO), physician assistants (PA) and other health care practitioners (e.g., EMTs)
- Corporate Office in Euless, Texas
- Advocacy Office in Washington, DC
- Services: USMLE, FCVS, Physician Data Center, health policy development, advocacy and education

SARS-CoV-2 Virus, a Novel Coronavirus

FSMB Pandemic Response Task Force
Established February 25, 2020

- Humayun Chaudhry, DO, MS (Interim Chair)
- Anne Lawler, JD
- CAPT Robin Hunter Buskey, DHSc, PA-C
- Susan Ksiazek, RPh, DPh (NABP)
- L. Blanton Marchese
- Frank Meyers, JD
- Jacqueline Watson, DO, MBA
- Janelle Rhyne, MD, MA
- Katherine Thomas, MN, RN (NCSBN)
- Scott Steingard, DO
- Patricia King, MD, PhD
- Cheryl Walker-McGill, MD, MBA
- Kandis McClure, JD, MPH (FSMB Staff)

FSMB Response to COVID-19

- We mobilized data and advocacy resources to assist states and territories in their efforts to quickly increase health care workforce capacity
- We provided free access to our Physician Data Center (PDC) to enable hospitals to quickly/accurately verify medical licenses
- We created an Ad Hoc Task Force on Pandemic Preparedness (later renamed Pandemic Response)
- We developed a COVID-19 website (www.fsmb.org) with state-by-state details on licensure waivers & other resources
- We released recommendations for licensure portability during COVID-19
State and Territorial Responses to COVID-19

- The states and territories have shown extraordinary flexibility by temporarily waiving or modifying medical licensure requirements to meet healthcare workforce needs:
  - 49 states have modified medical licensure requirements and/or renewals for out of state health care professionals
  - 45 states have modified in-state medical licensure requirements for telehealth from other states
  - 33 states have expedited licensure for retired or inactive physicians
  - 29 states are part of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact
  - 11 states are allowing early MD and DO graduates to provide care under the supervision of a licensed physician before July 1

Coalition for Physician Accountability

April 9, 2020

- The FSMB partnered with leaders of the AMA, AOA, CMSS, AAMC, ACOM, ACCME, ACGME, ECFMG, LCME, NBME, and NBOME to issue a consensus statement:

  We support "strengthened efforts that must be in place to safeguard the public and... protect our nation's health care workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic so they remain able to meet the public's needs."
Pandemic disrupted computer-based testing and Step 2CS

Step 2CS discontinued

Shift to reporting Step 1 as Pass/Fail (Effective 1/26/22)

USMLE adopts 4 attempt limit
Expanded reimbursement of telemedicine by Medicare in March 2020 was a pivotal event.

The same story in almost every sector of healthcare from outpatient care to nursing homes.

A watershed moment in the use and regulation of telemedicine moving forward.

**What is Telehealth?**
- The use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support and promote long-distance healthcare, patient, and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration.
- **Telehealth Technologies**
  - Video conferencing
  - The internet
  - Store-and-forward imaging
  - Streaming media
  - Terrestrial and wireless communications
  - Mobile phone use
Who is Getting Telemedicine?

- Telemedicine use more common among:
  - Younger enrollees (especially <50yo)
  - Urban enrollees

- Telemedicine use is less frequent among:
  - Older enrollees (>65yo)
  - Rural enrollees
  - Enrollees living in high % white counties

Which Doctors are Using Telemedicine?

- Substantial variation
- Majority of doctors using:
  - Endocrinology
  - Psychiatry
- Less than 1/3rd:
  - Orthopedic surgery
  - Ophthalmology

For What Conditions?

- Wide variation
- Behavioral health dominates in use
- Common chronic illnesses that are middle of the road –
  - Hypertension, diabetes
- Remarkable drop in upper respiratory infections like sinusitis

FSMB Workgroup on Telemedicine
July 15, 2021

Interstate Medical Licensure Compact
(As of March 11, 2022)

9 Physician Eligibility Requirements for Interstate Medical Licensure Compact

- Graduate of a medical school accredited by LOMC, COCA, or a medical school listed in the International Medical Education Directory or its equivalent
- Passed USMLE or COMLEX within 3 attempts, or any of its predecessor’s exams accepted by a state medical board
- Completed GME approved by ACGME or AOA
- Holds specialty certification or a time-unlimited specialty certificate recognized by ABMS or AOA’s Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists
- Possesses a full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in a Member state
- Has no criminal history
- Has no disciplinary action by a licensing agency
- Has never had a controlled substance license or permit suspended or revoked by the US DEA
- Is not under active investigation by a licensing agency or law enforcement authority
53.6% of All Humans Use the Internet

Infectious Pandemics: A Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>1918-20</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2020-?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Population</td>
<td>1.8 Billion</td>
<td>6.8 Billion</td>
<td>7.8 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Mode of Transportation</td>
<td>Ships, Railroad</td>
<td>Jet Aircraft, Automobile</td>
<td>Jet Aircraft, Automobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for Virus to Circle the Globe</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td>2 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated Dead Worldwide</td>
<td>50+ Million</td>
<td>151,700-575,400</td>
<td>6.3+ Million</td>
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Thank You

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