

Georgia Composite Medical Board



The Georgia Composite Medical Board traces its beginnings to 1825 and [Dr. Milton Antony](#), Dean of the Medical Academy of Georgia in Augusta, now the Medical College of Georgia. Concerned by an influx of a roving legion of quacks, Dr. Antony and the Medical Society of Augusta persuaded the state legislature to create the Georgia Medical Licensing Board, with Dr. Antony as its first president. The [first seal](#) on the board's licensing [certificate](#) depicts three famous physicians at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine: Dr. Benjamin Rush, considered the father of American medicine and psychiatry, Dr. Philip Syng Physick, the father of American surgery, and Dr. Caspar Wistar, a famous anatomist. These specialties represented all fields of medicine existing at that time.

Subsequent actions by the state legislature in 1835 and 1839 drastically weakened the board's oversight powers, essentially shutting it down. It wasn't until 1847, after yellow fever and other epidemics, that the Georgia Legislature revived the Act of 1825 and adopted the state's first Medical Practice Act. The act established minimum standards for licensure, required penalties for unlicensed practice and a code of conduct for licensees.

In 1860, Georgia and many other southern states passed a law automatically granting licenses to graduates from southern medical schools. Graduates from northern medical schools were required to pass an examination and pay a \$10 exam fee, which was used to fund board activities. Minority physicians were granted licenses beginning in the late 1880s. In 1897, Ms. Eliza Ann Grier of Philadelphia became the first African American woman to receive a license in the state of Georgia. In 1909, osteopathic physicians were first licensed in Georgia. From 1972 to 2002, various allied health groups were added to the board's oversight, including physician assistants, respiratory therapists, perfusionists, orthotists and prosthetists.

Until 1978 the medical board was comprised solely of physicians. The first consumer member was added in 1978 and a second consumer member was added in 2009. In 1999, the state legislature enacted law establishing the board as an independent executive agency. In 2009, the legislature amended the Medical Practice Act, expanding the board to 15 members and changing its name to the Georgia Composite Medical Board.