

Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure



The history of the Kentucky Medical Association, the Kentucky Board of Public Health and the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure is a closely integrated one, for many years embodied in the person of Joseph N. McCormack, M.D.

The Kentucky State Medical Society was officially incorporated on November 24, 1851, by action of the Kentucky General Assembly. In 1878 the Kentucky State Board of Health was created primarily to protect citizens against yellow fever, cholera and smallpox. Since its inception, the State Board of Health was recognized as the legal arm of the state medical association and was an obvious precursor to the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure.

Dr. McCormack served as Secretary of the Board of Health for 30 years and he became very involved with the Kentucky State Medical Society, serving as its president in 1884. He eventually played a critical role in the reorganization of the American Medical Association in the early 1900s and pushed the Kentucky government to enact strong public health laws in the 1880s.

In the 1880s, the General Assembly gave the State Board of Health control of the examination and regulation of those practicing the healing arts. In 1882, state, local, and city boards of health became government agencies with authority from the General Assembly to do “everything necessary to protect the public health.”

In 1905, the *Kentucky Medical Journal*, the medical association’s professional publication, published the state’s first Examination for License to Practice Medicine. It consisted of 100 questions and was given to 12 physicians; only four passed the exam. In 1920, the medical association and the board of health hired an attorney to assist in the enforcement of medical practice laws.

In 1972, the Kentucky State Board of Medical Licensure was formally created.