

Maryland Board of Physicians



In Maryland, the authority to license physicians was granted in 1798 to the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of the State of Maryland. Chirurgical was the common spelling of surgical at that time and the faculty was the incorporated society of physicians in Maryland. For the next 40 years, the faculty examined candidates, issued licenses upon payment of a fee and prosecuted unlicensed doctors. However, the petitions of botanic medical practitioners influenced the legislature to pass a law in 1838 allowing any person to collect fees for medical services performed, which effectively ended the licensing of doctors for 50 years in Maryland.

In 1888, the State Board of Health was authorized by the legislature to license all physicians. Four years later, the Medical Act of 1892 created the first state Board of Medical Examiners. The Board of Medical Examiners organized on June 2, 1892, and although the exams were advertised and various subjects assigned to members for examination, there were no applicants. The following year there were 54 applicants, of whom 45 were licensed. In 1894, an amendment to the Act of 1892 provided for general official registration of all physicians practicing in the state on or before the first day of June 1892.

From 1892 until the mid-1950s, two boards of medical examiners licensed physicians in Maryland – one represented the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty and the other the State Homeopathic Society. The General Assembly in 1957 abolished the Homeopathic Board and set up the State Board of Medical Examiners to regulate the practice of medicine. In 1968, responsibility for disciplining licensed physicians was assigned to the Commission on Medical Discipline of Maryland. Functions of the State Board of Medical Examiners and the Commission on Medical Discipline of Maryland combined in 1988 under the State Board of Physician Quality Assurance. In 2003, the board was renamed the State Board of Physicians.

Long time Maryland board President [Herbert Harlan, M.D.](#), (1906-1924) served as an energetic early member of the Federation of State Medical Boards' Executive Committee. In addition, Maryland board member [Henry M. Fitzhugh, M.D.](#) served as FSMB president from 1934 to 1935.

Source: <http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/16dhmh/html/16agen.html> and The medical annals of Maryland: 1799-1899 from Google books (see attached pdf)