

Michigan Board of Medicine



Nine years after the British evacuated Detroit in 1796, the territory of Michigan was organized and incorporated into the United States. It became the 26th state in 1837. The earliest oversight of the medical profession in Michigan began with the medical society Incorporating Act of 1819, which stated the society shall “form a board to examine students...” The act was amended several times over the next 20 years to address the “large number of quacks who came to the new state.” However, the medical profession remained largely unregulated. In fact the Michigan Supreme Court ruled in an 1846 decision that “A doctor is any person calling himself such.”

In 1899, the state legislature in Public Act 237 established the Michigan State Board of Registration in Medicine. The act provided for the examination, regulation, licensing and registration of physicians and surgeons in the state of Michigan, and for the discipline of offenders against the act.

In 1937, the Basic Science Bill became law. It established a six-man board to give two tests per year in the basic sciences, which included anatomy, physiology, pathology, bacteriology, hygiene and public health, and chemistry. Passing the exam was a prerequisite for practicing the art of healing in Michigan. Two individuals wrote the first exam in March 1940 and both failed to pass. Seventy-six individuals took the second exam in June 1940; 53 passed and 23 failed. After 35 years, the Michigan Basic Science Act was repealed in 1972.

On Jan. 8, 1974, a new Medical Practice Act, Public Act of 1973, became effective. It continued in effect until Sep. 30, 1978, when the board’s authority was transferred to the Public Health Code in Public Act 368 of 1978, as amended.

In 1986, legislation was enacted to strengthen physician licensure and regulation. The legislation increased funding and staff for the Board of Medicine. More investigators and a full-time administrator were added to the board.

The Michigan Board of Medicine consists of 19 voting members: 10 medical doctors, one physician’s assistant and eight public members. It currently oversees the practice of approximately 36,055 medical doctors.

Among the notable leaders in the Michigan medical regulatory community are the following individuals who served a past FSMB president/chair: Guy L. Connor, M.D. (1928-29), J. Earl McIntyre, M.D. (1941-42) and Elmer W. Schnoor, M.D. (1954-55).

Source: A History of the Michigan State Medical Society, 1866-2007 MSMS History Book with Addendum. Contact: Sheri Greenhoe, MSMS director of Marketing Communications & Media, (517) 336-7603, sgreenhoe@msms.org.