

Nebraska Board of Medicine and Surgery



In 1854, when the Nebraska Territory was created, the first physicians arrived in Omaha. One early physician of note, Dr. G.L. Miller, was very successful with the Indian population. He was said to “have outdone the celebrity of the infallible medicine-man among his own tribe.”

Nearly 40 years later in 1891, the original law forming the State Board of Health was enacted. It empowered the board to grant and revoke licenses for the practice of medicine and surgery, dentistry and nursing, and appoint boards of examiners for professional medical persons. In 1917, the state health department was reorganized. An advisory board of four physicians appointed by the governor was established to conduct examinations for licenses to practice medicine.

In 1927, the legislature passed the basic science law, which requires that before applicants can be examined in any of the healing arts, they must secure a certificate of ability from the basic science board. The certificate relates to chiropractic, osteopathy, medicine and surgery, and covers the following six subjects: anatomy, physiology, chemistry, bacteriology, pathology and hygiene.

The Nebraska State Department of Health was created by the 1933 legislature. Among its many divisions was the Bureau of Examining Boards. The bureau oversees the professions of chiropractic, chiropody, dentistry, embalming, medicine and surgery, nursing, optometry, osteopathy, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine and surgery. In 1981, the legislature defined the role of the 15-member Board of Health as the Bureau of Examining Boards. From 1981 to present time, the sole role of the Board of Health has been to govern the Bureau of Examining Boards.

Five Nebraskans have served as past FSMB president or chair, including J.G. Lehnhoff, M.D., (1938-39), Earle C. Johnson, M.D. (1948-49), Leo T. Heywood, M.D. (1968-69), [Dan A. Nye, M.D.](#) (1975-76) and [John C. Sage, M.D.](#) (1985-86).