

Wyoming Board of Medicine

FY 2011 Annual Report

December 1, 2011

General Information

Kevin Bohnenblust, Executive Director
320 West 25th Street, Suite 200
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Telephone: (307) 778-7053
Fax: (307) 778-2069
Web: <http://wyomedboard.state.wy.us>
General E-mail: wyomedboard@wyo.gov

Constitutional and Statutory References

W.S. § 33-26-202(b)(vii)

Clients Served

- Citizens of the State of Wyoming
- Physicians and Physician Assistants providing health care to the citizens of the State of Wyoming
- Hospitals and Clinics in the State of Wyoming which recruit and credential Physicians and Physician Assistants

Budget Information

Budget Fiscal Year 2011 Expenditures through June 30, 2011: \$727,686.24
Funding: 100% self funded from application, licensing, renewal and verification fees, and publication sales.

Employees

Full time Employees: 4
Full Time AWEC Employee: 1

Reporting Period

Fiscal Year 2011 (July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2011)

Wyoming Quality of Life Results

The Board of Medicine safeguards and promotes public health, safety and welfare by maintaining consumer confidence in physicians and physician assistants through enforcement of high standards for professional licensing and the practice of medicine.

Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life

Maintaining and promoting the health and well-being of the citizens of Wyoming is the goal of the Board of Medicine. All Board activities revolve around protecting public health, safety, and welfare. A crucial Board duty is determining the qualifications and fitness to practice of physicians and physician assistants who apply for licensure to practice in Wyoming. Complaints against licensees are investigated and when it is determined that licensees have violated provisions of the Wyoming Medical Practice Act, the Board imposes appropriate disciplinary sanctions. Information regarding the filing of complaints and results of actions taken are publicized on the Board's web site.

The Board also contracts with and participates in a program assisting licensees who are diagnosed with alcohol and substance abuse disorders. The program allows physicians and physician assistants to safely return to practice after treatment, remediation and monitoring.

Individually and collectively these activities contribute to the quality of life of Wyoming citizens.

Basic Facts

Located in Cheyenne, the Board of Medicine employs four full-time employees and one full-time AWEC employee. The eight member board consists of five physicians, including not less than one (1) doctor of osteopathy (D.O.) and not less than two (2) doctors of medicine (M.D.), one (1) physician assistant, and two (2) lay (public) members. Physician specialties currently represented on the Board are pediatrics, family medicine, psychiatry, obstetrics and surgery.

The Board's Physician Assistant Advisory Council currently consists of three (3) physicians, three (3) physician assistants, and one (1) non-licensee. Current physician members of the Council practice in pediatrics and family medicine.

Four formal board meetings are scheduled each year, normally taking two (2) days, with additional meetings held as necessary to accommodate Board business.

As of December 1, 2011, there are 3,031 physicians licensed by the Wyoming Board of Medicine, approximately 1,062 of whom reside in Wyoming. There are 224 physician assistants with active licenses.

Performance

In the past two years the Board and its staff have undertaken major changes to improve both the speed and quality of physician licensure in Wyoming. Updates include:

- Implementation of an expedited temporary license by endorsement, permitting qualified physicians who have been licensed in other states at least three years to

get a temporary license within a few days after applying, while waiting on permanent licensure until the documentation in the application file is complete.

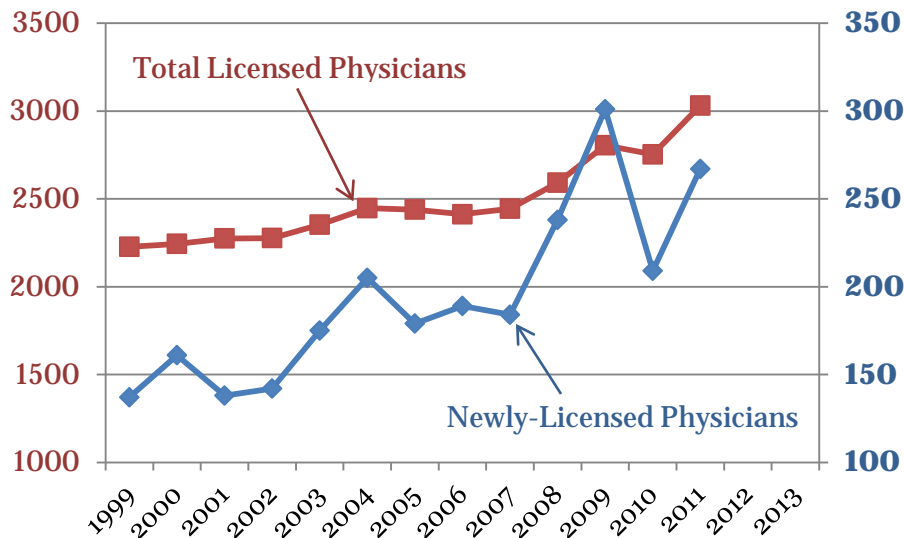
- Conversion of data systems to update a twenty year old system and permit on-line renewal of, and application for, physician and physician assistant licenses, and payment of fees by credit card. In the first renewal cycle using the new system, 88% of the physicians renewing a medical license did so on-line.
- Adoption of an on-line, national “Uniform Application” for physician licensure that is now accepted by 15 states, and is under consideration by more than a dozen others.

More specific information on the various components of the Board of Medicine’s activities includes:

Physician Licensure –

Physician licensure in Wyoming continues to rise, with the total number of active licenses exceeding 3,000 for the first time ever in 2011. (Figure 1.) In addition, the number of new physician licenses issued in 2011 was second highest on record at 267.

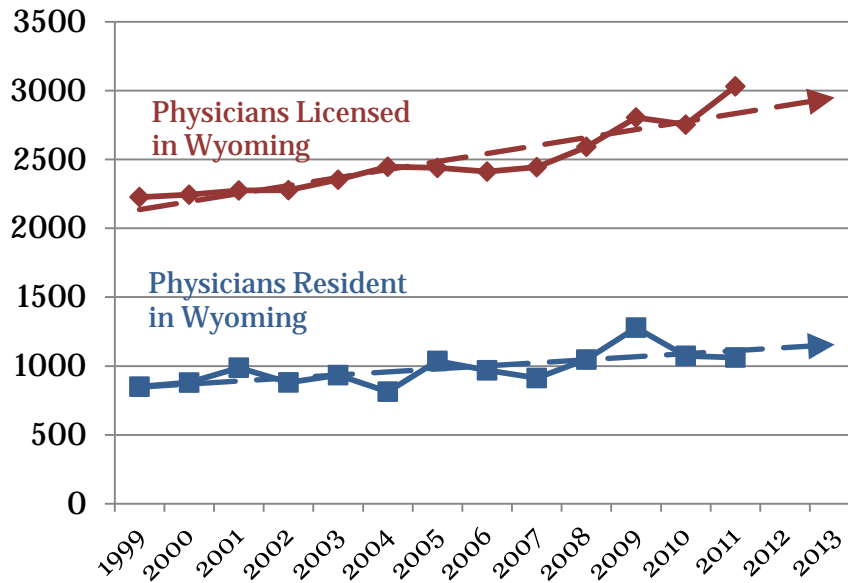
Figure 1: Physician Population and New Physician Licenses Issued in Wyoming



While the total population of physicians licensed in Wyoming continued to grow in 2011, the number resident in Wyoming rose at a slower rate. (Figure 2.) This trend appears to be correlate with the increasing number of physicians who are practicing via

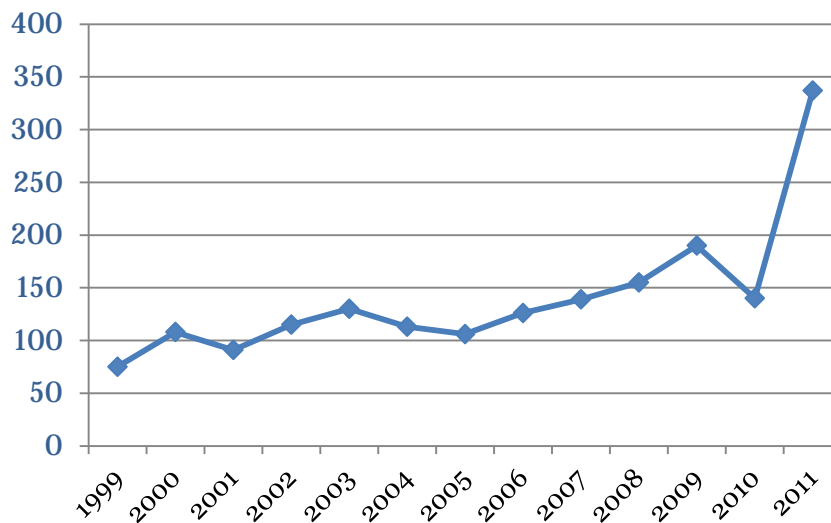
telemedicine from out of state, or are coming into Wyoming from surrounding states to conduct regular clinic hours but are not relocating their primary practice to Wyoming.

Figure 2: Physicians Resident in Wyoming vs. Total Licensed Population



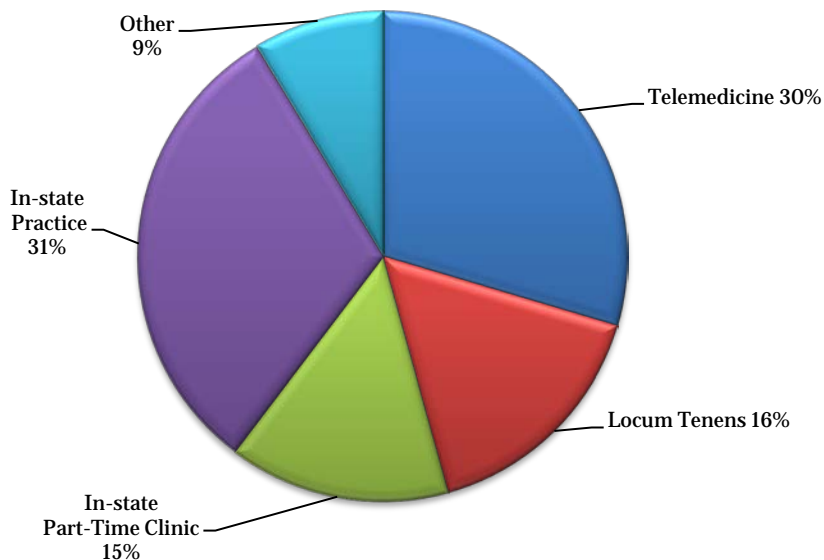
In response to interest from physicians, hospitals and other organizations, the Board revised its regulations to permit issuance of temporary medical licenses to well-qualified applicants earlier in the application process, thereby permitting them to provide medical care to Wyoming residents sooner. This has resulted in a surge of temporary licenses, more than doubling from 140 in 2010 to 337 in 2011. (Figure 3.)

Figure 3: Physician Temporary Licenses Issued Annually



These changes are expected to facilitate the practice of telemedicine by physicians in other states to deliver care to Wyoming residents. This appears to be confirmed by the projected practice plans of physicians licensed in Wyoming in 2011. These figures reflect not only the expansion of telemedicine in the state, but the trend for a growing majority of Wyoming-licensed physicians to not be resident in the state while still practicing here. (Figure 3.) Of those licensed in 2011, only 31% planned to practice full-time in Wyoming, while 51% indicated they would be practicing in Wyoming without relocating to the state (Telemedicine, Locum Tenens [temporary practice], and In-State Part-Time Clinic).

Figure 4: Practice Plans of Physicians Newly Licensed in 2011



Discipline and Compliance –

In FY 2011 86 complaints were filed against physicians and physician assistants; of these, 59 were closed with no action. Most often complaints are closed because, upon investigation, it was determined that the alleged actions, if proven, would not constitute a violation of the Wyoming Medical Practice Act.

Twenty seven complaints were subject of additional investigation and formal dockets were opened in six cases. In three cases, licensees voluntarily relinquished their licenses, and one licensee agreed to voluntary suspension. One petition for reinstatement of a license was granted and one was denied, and three licenses were issued with stipulations for restrictions or conditions on the license.

External Communications –

In the past year the Board resumed publication of its newsletter and issued its 2011 Physician Directory, a 254-page spiral-bound volume including lists of all physicians

and physician assistants licensed in Wyoming, the full text of the Wyoming Medical Practice Act and the Board's RULES AND REGULATIONS, the American Medical Association's "Principles of Medical Ethics," the American Osteopathic Association's "Code of Ethics," and contact information for Wyoming hospitals and medical licensing boards in other states.

