

T EXAS STATE BOARD OF PODIATRIC MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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HEMANT MAKAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

<http://www.tsbpme.texas.gov>

[Effective July 5, 2006]

[Updated April 14, 2016]

PURPOSE

The Sunset Advisory Commission, during the 79th Legislative Session (2005), required that the Texas State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners (TSBPME) implement a “Use of Technology” policy.

Texas Occupations Code §202.162 “Use of Technology” provides that: “The Board shall implement a policy requiring the Board to use appropriate technological solutions to improve the Board's ability to perform its functions. The policy must ensure that the public is able to interact with the Board on the Internet.”

MISSION

The purpose of the TSBPME is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the State of Texas through regulation of Podiatric Physicians licensed by the Board and investigation of complaints against Podiatric Physicians and persons practicing Podiatric Medicine without a Texas license. It is our goal to ensure that Texas consumers are effectively and efficiently served by high quality professionals and businesses by setting clean standards and maintaining compliance.

The Texas State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners develops, through its planning process, an Information Resources Strategic Plan (IRSP). The “Information Resource” goals of the agency are consistent with the agency's overall Strategic Plan. They include the on-going review of the agency's overall operations to determine if additional or updated information resources are necessary to continue to regulate effectively in the public interest and the pursuit of securing necessary resources. These goals support the “Statewide Strategic Plan for Information Resources Management” as outlined by the Texas Department of Information Resources (Texas Government Code § 2054.091 and §2054.096).

POLICY

It is the policy of the Texas State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners to ensure that the public is able to interact with the Board on the Internet. Any person may use the Board's website to send electronic mail (e-mail) to Board staff for any reason to include questions, concerns, or information requests. Citizens may download a complaint form from the Board's website to register a complaint against a Podiatric Physician; issues related to the practice of Podiatric Medicine or can submit a complaint as an e-mail. The public may review a variety of information on the website, including License Verifications and Disciplinary Actions (Board Actions).

All Board Actions are reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank and Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (**NPDB**) as **required by Federal Law** (in part, Title IV of Public Law 99-660; the Health Care Quality Improvement Act of 1986, as amended 42 USC Sec. 11101 01/26/98). Board Actions, as a service to the citizens of Texas (Open Record), are published on the Board's website pursuant to Texas Occupations Code §202.201 "Public Interest Information" which provides: "(a) The Board shall prepare information of public interest describing the functions of the Board and the Board's procedures by which complaints are filed with and resolved by the Board. (b) The Board shall make the information available to the public and appropriate state agencies." All T.S.B.P.M.E. investigations resulting in sustained violations of the Podiatric Medical Practice Act of Texas, the Board Rules and any other applicable law are adjudicated via a Board Order/Agreed Order. Those Orders are approved and executed at a Public Meeting, at which time they become a Public/Open Record.

Applicants for a Podiatric Physician license may view requirements and request an application to sit for the Board's Jurisprudence Examination from the website. Current license holders may use www.texas.gov (Texas.Gov) to renew a license or to report a change of address to the Board.

Information about Board activities, such as copies of agendas/minutes and certain licensure materials, are available as Open Records requests. All Board complaint, report, investigation files, or other investigative information in the possession of or received or gathered by the Board or an employee or agent of the Board that relates to a license holder, a license application, or a criminal investigation or proceeding is privileged, confidential, and not subject to discovery, subpoena, or any other legal method of compelling release pursuant to Texas Occupations Code §202.509.

The Board, as described below, works collaboratively with the Texas Department of Information Resources and the Texas Health Professions Council to continue to improve or implement technological solutions to enhance its ability to perform its functions and to maintain and improve public services available on the Internet.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRAMS

Texas Occupations Code Chapter 101 provides that the TSBPME be a member of the Health Professions Council (HPC). HPC provides a means for the member regulatory agencies represented on the council to coordinate administrative and regulatory efforts. One major HPC administrative service is Information Technology Systems Support (ITSS), which includes: Network Administration, Desktop Administration, Hardware Support, Email Administration, Web Page

Development, Texas Online Support, IT Purchase Consulting, Imaging System Administration, and IT Project Management. Any TSBPME service needs for IT are submitted via the HPC-Help Desk.

As part of the Board's requisite statutory relationship with HPC, we pay an annual fee per year (as adjusted) for ITSS support. This amount is calculated in part by HPC as a proportion of costs based on TSBPME-IT needs (Help Desk requests).

All automated information is maintained, secured and located on servers in the Board office. The Board currently contracts IT support and resources via an interagency contract through the Health Professional Council and with the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) that includes support of internet access through the Texas Facilities Commission (CAPNET).

Again, Texas Occupations Code §202.162 "Use of Technology" provides that: "The Board shall implement a policy requiring the Board to use appropriate technological solutions to improve the Board's ability to perform its functions. The policy must ensure that the public is able to interact with the Board on the Internet."

The agency's website (<http://www.tsbpme.texas.gov>) is hosted by the Texas State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners. All web publishing and maintenance of the website is done in-house. Updates to the website are timely, in full content control and have included the use of web based applications that better serve our external customers. The website is in accordance with the Texas Open Records Act, and in the spirit of "open government", publications include, but are not limited to: agency information, licensing examination dates, verification of podiatric physicians, disciplinary actions, information on continuing education, laws and statutes, downloadable forms and Board orders, as well as, links to other agencies related to the Board and its mission. We will be adding in the future, the capability to download additional licensure forms.

The Board strives to increase cross-government and interagency activities, along with public services while maintaining a return on investment with existing equipment and software that services the Board's internal-external customers. Consumers and members of the profession, as well as other state agencies welcome the opportunity to access this information and communication through current technology.

Funding is a continuous challenge and it is our goal to maintain, at a bare minimum, IT services for file, database and web services, along with allowing for expansion and efficient management with existing equipment, and software to expand future services with the aid of new technology purchases.

INQUIRIES

Inquiries regarding the content of this policy should be directed to Hemant Makan, Executive Director, at (512)-475-3301 or by e-mail at Hemant.Makan@tsbpme.texas.gov.

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