



Georgia Composite Medical Board



Serving Georgia Through Challenging Times: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2009

Visit us on the web at www.medicalboard.georgia.gov

The Georgia Composite Medical Board: Embracing Change and Confronting Challenges

In the 2009 Session, the General Assembly passed House Bill 509, a broad and significant bill giving the Board enhanced ability to protect the patients of Georgia through broader authority to regulate its previous licensee groups as well as two formally recognized technicians, polysomnography and radiology technicians. The size of the Board was also increased by two members to reflect the additional work that accompanies its broader responsibilities. At the same time, the Board's budget was reduced significantly in the face of continuing and growing fiscal pressures facing Georgians in all economic sectors. The Board was forced to reduce its headcount by 11 percent in the face of dwindling resources. Fortunately, the Board had set into motion an e-government solution that allowed licensees and license applicants to conduct many transactions through a secure website. This e-government solution, implemented in mid-December 2008, was enthusiastically adopted by the licensees and consumers the Board served. Since January 1, 2009, 48.7% of all complaints filed were filed online, and 48.0% of all applications for physician licenses were filed online – a tremendous adoption rate in such a brief period.

Your Georgia Composite Medical Board is made up of thirteen physicians, two consumer members, and an ex-officio physician assistant member supported by a staff of 30 dedicated employees and consultants. The Board is an independent executive agency that continues to oversee the practice of medicine in Georgia, while also licensing and regulating the practitioners of many other allied professions including:

Physician Assistants	Physician Residents in Training
Respiratory Care Professionals	Acupuncturists
Orthotists and Prosthetists	Clinical Perfusionists
Polysomnography Technicians	Radiology Technicians

Each of these allied professions is represented by advisory committee members who are practicing members of their respective professions. The Nurse Practitioner community, too, is represented on the Nurse Protocol Committee by volunteers who are active nurse practitioners in our state. Like the Board members themselves, the unpaid volunteers on the Board's advisory committees generously give their time and effort to ensure the health and safety of their fellow Georgians.

Our mission statement – “To drive the continued improvement in the delivery of safe, quality and ethical health care to the citizens of Georgia through the development and promotion of high standards for the licensure of physicians and other health care providers as provided under the Medical Practice Act” – is a constant reminder of our purpose.

The Board fulfills its mission through three core activities:

- Licensing qualified health care practitioners.
- Enforcing rigorous quality and ethical standards within the practice of the professions we regulate.
- Providing Georgia's health care consumers with information that enables them to make wise choices.

Members of the Board

John T. "Ted" Perry, MD
Chairperson
White

William J. Butler, MD
Macon

Alexander S. Gross, MD
Atlanta

Kathy Kemle, PA-C (*ex-officio member*)
Thomasville

Marion O. Lee, MD
Cordele

Roland S. Summers, MD
Savannah

Richard L. Weil, MD
Atlanta

W. Alan Woolery, DO, PhD
Warner Robins

William E. Roundtree, MD
Vice Chairperson
Columbus

Eddie R. Cheeks, MD
Augusta

M. Vinayak Kamath, MD
Augusta

Kathleen "Kathy" Kinlaw
Decatur

David W. Retterbush, MD
Valdosta

Jean Rawlings Sumner, MD
Wrightsville

Charles L. White, DO
Cleveland



Management Team and Members of the Georgia Composite Medical Board

Front row: LaSharn Hughes, Roland S. Summers, Jean Rawlings Sumner, John T. "Ted" Perry, Eddie R. Cheeks, Charles L. White, Betsy D. Cohen (standing)

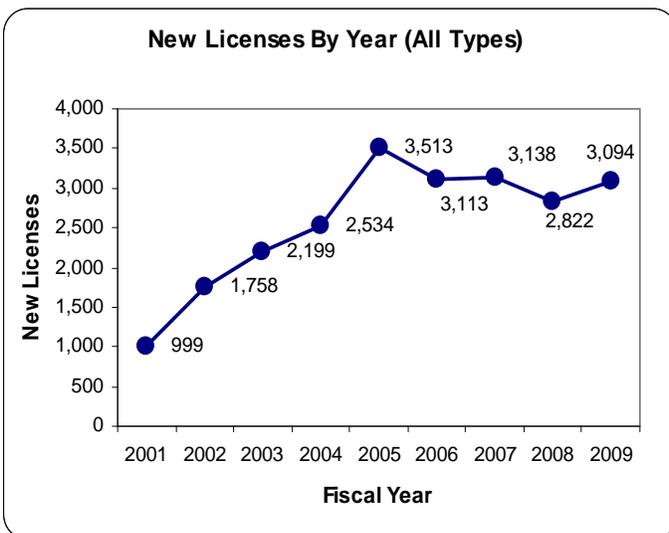
Back row: Kathy Kemle, Richard L. Weil, Robert Jeffery, William E. Roundtree, M. Vinayak Kamath, Marion O. Lee, Alexander S. Gross, W. Alan Woolery, William J. Butler, Kathleen Kinlaw, Jeffrey D. Lane

Not pictured: David W. Retterbush, Surender Kumar

Profession	Active Licenses	New Licenses issued in FY09
Physician	30,129	1,600
Respiratory Care Professional	4,950	320
Physician's Assistant	3,058	256
Physician Resident	1,688	881
Acupuncturist	202	17
Perfusionist	121	12
Orthotist / Prosthetist	209	8
ALL LICENSES	40,357	3,094

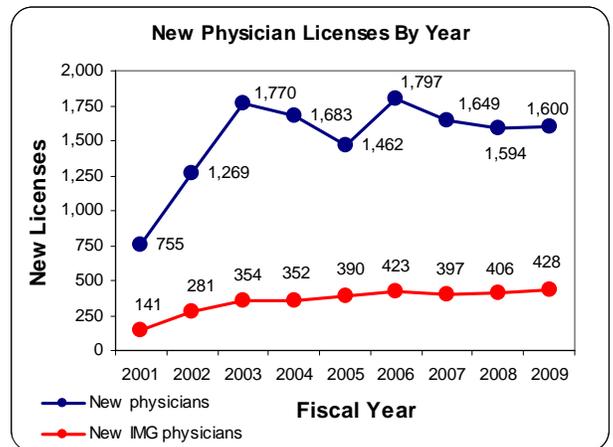
Active licenses by profession on November 6, 2009. Physician includes physicians holding Institutional Physician, Provisional Physician, and Volunteer in Medicine licenses. Orthotist / Prosthetist includes professionals holding Orthotist, Prosthetist, and Orthotist & Prosthetist licenses.

GCMB regulates and licenses twelve professions with a combined total of 40,357 actively-licensed practitioners. During FY 2009, the GCMB Licensure Unit issued 1,600 new physician licenses. Of these, 27% were international medical graduates, extending a trend of increases in the proportion of international medical graduates licensed in the state. Including all types of licenses, the Licensure Unit issued 3,094 licenses, an increase of 9.6% over FY 2008.



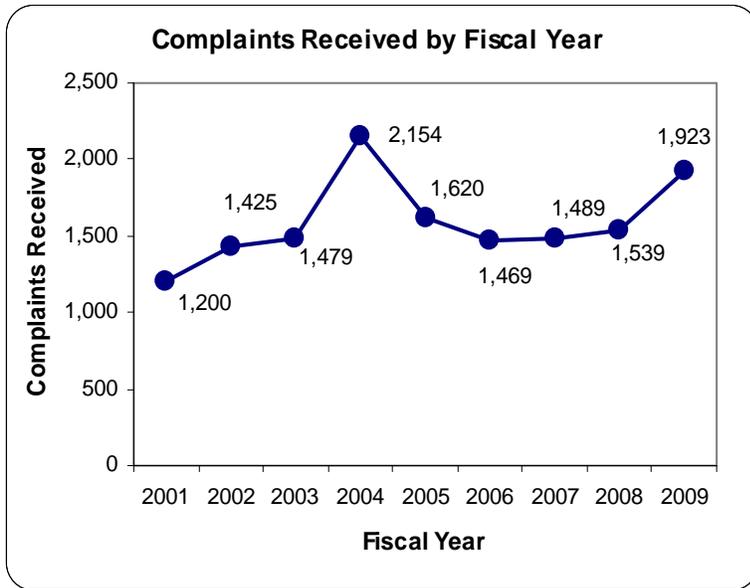
Licensing

Through the licensure process, GCMB ensures that the professionals we regulate meet the standards of education, training, and professional conduct necessary to serve Georgia patients effectively and safely. As a part of the licensure application process, applicants must submit an application for licensure and have their school submit original documents of their education and training. Applicants must also provide details of their work history and proof of their clinical knowledge as demonstrated by rigorous subject-based examinations. Additionally, applicants are required to reveal any information about their medical history that could affect their ability to practice, as well as any arrests or convictions. Additionally, applicants must report any disciplinary actions taken against them by other licensing boards, and whether there are any open investigations or complaints pending in other state licensing boards. Every two years, licensees must renew their licenses in order to continue to practice. The renewal process allows GCMB to ensure that each licensee continues to meet current training, continuing education, and professional conduct standards.



Driving Continuous Improvement in Processing Time

Over the course of Fiscal Year 2009, the Board continued to aggressively drive down its average processing time for applications. The average time it took an applicant for initial physician's license in FY2009 was 68.2 days, as measured from the day the application was received to the day the license was issued. This is a remarkable achievement given that virtually all applications arrive incomplete and that licenses are only issued monthly at the adjournment of the Board meetings.

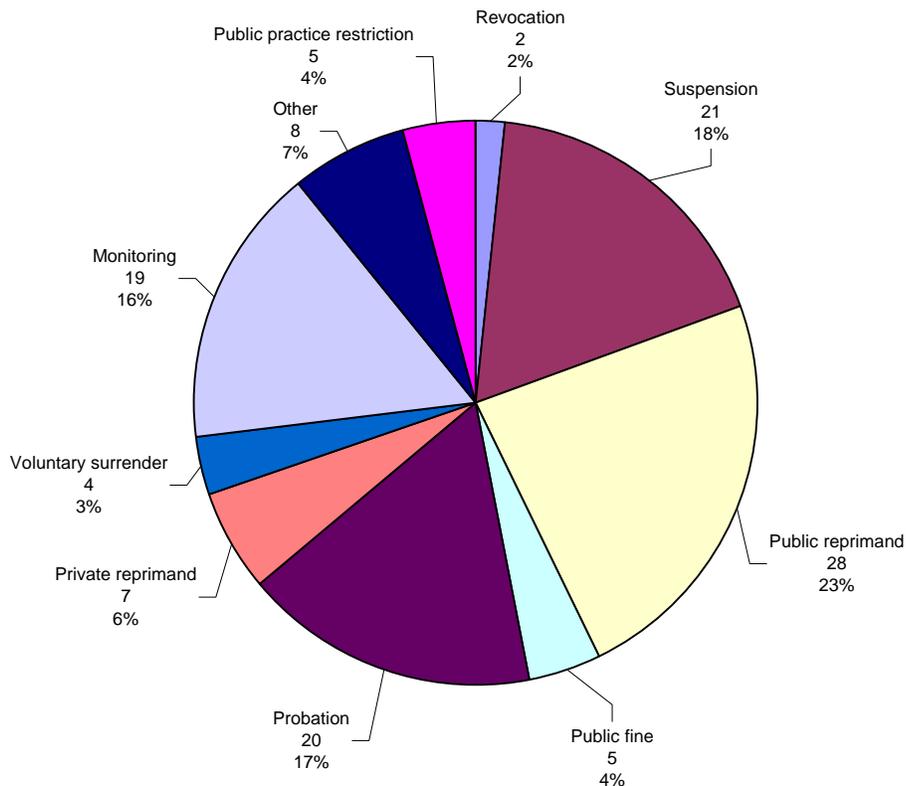


Enforcement & Investigations

The Board's responsibility extends beyond the licensing of physicians and other health care providers. GCMB is also responsible for regulating the practice of the health care providers through Georgia's Medical Practice Act and its companion rules. The Board devotes much of its time to this serious responsibility, investigating complaints from consumers and reviewing malpractice settlements and judgments, as well as information received from hospitals, other state medical boards, and organizations such as the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB).

GCMB provides a variety of avenues for ensuring that its licensees are practicing ethically and professionally within the guidelines of the law. The GCMB website, www.medicalboard.georgia.gov, contains the laws and rules practitioners must follow and includes information and forms for filing complaints about illegal, unethical, or unprofessional practice. GCMB also publishes newsletters and coordinates its efforts with professional associations to educate practitioners about how to avoid the kinds of actions that could result in Board discipline. These measures are in place to help the Board guard against unprofessional conduct and protect the safety of Georgia health care consumers.

Discipline by Type, Fiscal Year 2009



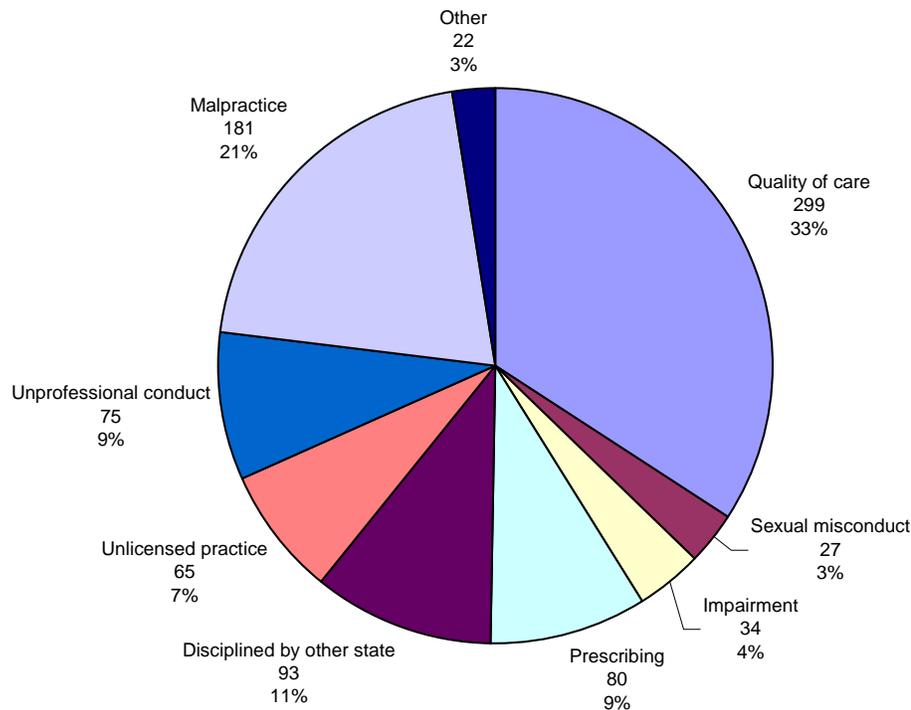
Once a complaint is received, GCMB staff members research the particulars of the allegation. This could include gathering information from medical records, malpractice settlements, statements from the respondent and complainant, and other sources. This information is then forwarded to the Board, which, through its Investigative Committee, evaluates the complaint and presents its recommendation to the full Board. The Board then decides upon the appropriate action to take, or it could return the case to the staff for further investigation or order a peer review of the complaint. Board actions can range from closing the case with no further action, issuing a letter of concern, ordering various practice restrictions and/or fines, and sanctioning the practitioner's license. License revocation is the most severe sanction.

In FY 2009, GCMB received 1,923 complaints against its licensees, an increase of 25.0 percent over the preceding year, and the second-greatest number of complaints since 2001, just behind the peak year of FY 2004. This dramatic increase in the number of complaints was attributed to the implementation of the Board's online complaints system, through which consumers could file complaints via the web. Since January 2009, the first full month in which consumers could use the online complaint system, 48.7% of all complaints filed were filed online, representing an enormous benefit to Georgia's patient community.

When GCMB receives a complaint against a licensee or alleged unlicensed practitioner, it accords the practitioner the rights of due process. One of the pillars of due process is the presumption of innocence. GCMB Investigations, a certified law enforcement unit, helps the Board ensure that disciplinary actions are taken only after thorough investigation of the allegations.

During FY 2009, GCMB agents investigated 876 cases. Of these, malpractice and quality of care cases accounted for 21 and 33 percent of the total intake, respectively.

Investigations Completed in Fiscal Year 2009 by Type



Protecting the Public, Serving Professionals, 24 Hours a Day: www.medicalboard.georgia.gov

The general public, professional licensees, healthcare organizations, and other entities need the services the Board provides. Using a website praised by Public Citizen for its ease of use as well as the breadth of information it provides, a consumer can search for a licensee, view a physician's profile, look up a licensee's public disciplinary records, and even file a complaint online. A licensee can update his or her contact information, renew a license, order a duplicate identification card, or even apply for a new license online. All these services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, from any web-capable device.

The Board regards the public's right and need to know about their licensed healthcare providers as one of the most important functions we have. Our website includes a wealth of information, including:

- Information about current and former Georgia Medical Board licensees
- Location of licensees
- Public disciplinary records
- Dates, times, and agendas of Board meetings
- Minutes and other public records of Board meetings
- Statistical data, including the number of active licensees in each profession we regulate
- Rules and laws pertaining to the Georgia Medical Board

Look Up a Licensed Provider

To look up a health care provider licensed by the Georgia Medical Board, enter a keyword (last name, license number OR city) AND select a provider type, then select the SEARCH button.

Enter Search Criteria

All fields indicated with * are required

***Keyword** Enter at least one of the following

Last Name:

License Number:

City:

***Provider Type:**

Instructions:

1. Enter one or more keywords (last name, license number OR city) AND select a provider type, then select the SEARCH button.

Our Staff

Our people are at the heart of our accomplishments. The Georgia Medical Board is fortunate to have dedicated, competent personnel who take their jobs – and our mission – seriously. Every day, these men and women perform the tasks that enable the Board to protect the health of Georgians through our licensing and enforcement activities. They include:

LaSharn Hughes, MBA
Executive Director

Surender Kumar, M.D.
Interim Medical Director

Betsy D. Cohen, Esq.
Staff Attorney

Diane Atkinson
*Administrative Assistant
to the Executive Director*

Jean Rice
Systems Administrator

Mary Harris
Licensing Manager

Gladys Henderson
Physician Licensure

Shonda Roberts
Physician Licensure

Carol Dorsey
*Acupuncture Licensure and
Nurse Protocol Review*

Phyllis Perry
Enforcement Unit

Sharon Cloud
Enforcement Unit

Lem Roberts
Medical Board Agent, Senior

Stephanie Cleary
Medical Board Agent, Senior

Pearl Mason-Stokes
Information and Referral Specialist

Robert Jeffery, MBA
Director of Operations

Jeffrey D. Lane, M.S.
Director of Investigations

Peter Ciejek, M.D.
Medical Consultant

Phyllis White
Operations Analyst

Nancy Teele, M.S.
Financial Administrator

Deborah Bruce
Physician Licensure

Lynette Riddle
Physician Assistant and Perfusionist Licensure

Katonya Reynolds
*Respiratory Care Professional and
Orthotist & Prosthetist Licensure*

Franchesca Virgil
Enforcement Unit Supervisor

Shana Finney
Enforcement Unit

Adrienne Baker
Medical Board Agent, Principal

Steve Wills
Medical Board Agent, Senior

Emmalie Kirkland
Medical Board Agent, Senior

Elizabeth Beavers
Compliance Manager

FY 2009 Revenue and Expenditures: A Year of Challenge, Yet Still An Outstanding Value to Georgia

Revenue:

Fiscal Year 2009 appropriation (as passed)	\$ 2,394,849
Application, renewal, and other license fees	\$ 3,416,802
Other income	\$ 274,415
Adjustment for reductions in employee benefit costs	\$ (126,531)
Adjustment for budget cuts	\$ (228,069)

Total Revenues **\$ 5,731,466**

Expenditures:

Personal services	\$ 1,746,695
General operating	\$ 152,833
Investigative & related	\$ 128,072
Travel	\$ 31,289
Voice, data, & information systems	\$ 303,504
Rent	\$ 40,000
Extraordinary items (replacement vehicle)	\$ 17,165

Total Expenditures **\$ 2,419,588**

Net Contribution to State Treasury: **\$ 3,311,878**