



## **Composite State Board of Medical Examiners**



**FASTER. FRIENDLIER. EASIER.**

# **Achieving Goals, Serving Georgia: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2008**

*Visit us on the web at [www.medicalboard.georgia.gov](http://www.medicalboard.georgia.gov)*

## Message from the Executive Director: LaSharn Hughes, MBA

The mission of the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners is to serve and protect the health of Georgia's citizens. Each of the Board members and our staff take this mission statement seriously, working to license only qualified health care providers and to take appropriate disciplinary action against those who violate the laws and rules. The Board holds monthly meetings, reviewing an average of over 100 complaints and over 300 license applications each month. In addition to the complaints and applications reviewed, a large volume of correspondence is discussed and interviews are also scheduled for purposes of licensing (between five and ten each month) or enforcement matters (between twelve and twenty-five each month).

Along with other state agencies, the Board is coping with budget cuts, but we have given Governor Perdue our unwavering commitment to continue to provide the same services during these tough economic times. In light of the budget cuts, the Board will no longer provide a hard copy of the newsletter. Without the expense of producing and mailing the newsletter, the Board can now offer quarterly newsletters on our website.

The Board was recognized this year by the University of Wisconsin's Pain and Policy Studies Group for changes to its pain management guidelines. This group grades the fifty states on the quality of their pain management policies. The State of Georgia had the largest grade improvement in the history of the survey, leaping from a grade of D+ to a grade of B in a span of a single year. This significant improvement came through the hard work and dedication of the Board, in conjunction with the State Legislature, as representatives of both bodies met with other interested parties around the state to clarify and improve the Board's pain management policy. The Board is committed to supporting the state's health care providers in the appropriate use of pain medications. To that end, the Board will continue to participate as a member organization of the **Georgia Pain Initiative**, which serves to improve the quality of life for Georgia's children and adults affected by pain through education, advocacy, public policy, and the promotion of excellence in clinical practice.

During the past fiscal year, the Board and staff met their annual goals and initiatives and will continue to work toward improving our licensing and complaints processes through the implementation of our new online services, which became active in December 2008. This cutting-edge e-government initiative has made the Board more accessible to our current licensees and potential licensees by providing an online presence to apply and check the status of requests made to the Board. Health care consumers will also benefit from this service, because they are now able to not only find information on their health care providers, but can also file complaints online at the Board's website. The Board will continue to provide public outreach by making presentations to interested groups on such topics as prescribing, protecting your license, and applying to practice in Georgia. The staff and Board members are also actively involved with two national organizations, the **Federation of State Medical Boards** and **Administrators in Medicine**, keeping Georgia at the forefront of current trends and changes in healthcare matters.

I personally thank all of the members of the Board and the Advisory Committees who serve the citizens of Georgia faithfully and tirelessly without compensation each month. The important work you do for the citizens of Georgia is vital, respected and greatly appreciated.

*LaSharn Hughes, MBA  
Executive Director  
Composite State Board of Medical Examiners*

## Message from the Board President: Jean Rawlings Sumner, MD

The practice of medicine changes continually, and healthcare delivery is increasingly complicated. One thing, however, does not change: the commitment of the Medical Board to all Georgians in need of health care. As an organization, the Board's duty is to license competent practitioners and discipline those who fail to meet basic standards of care. Our priorities are patient safety and quality of care.

Georgia is blessed with some of the best healthcare professionals in this country. Our mission is to ensure that the care they provide is second to none. The Board is comprised of thirteen volunteer members, appointed by the Governor, who work with a dedicated, professional staff and volunteer advisory committee members from each of the professions we regulate, to achieve our goals. We strive to build relationships with other disciplines such as nursing and pharmacy, recognizing that provision of care is increasingly a team effort which is best led by a physician.

No profession is a higher calling than that of the practice of medicine. Few, if any, professions are more challenging. It is a privilege for the members of the Georgia Medical Board to serve Georgians and work with the larger community to achieve a healthier, safer Georgia.

*Jean Rawlings Sumner, MD*  
*President*  
*Composite State Board of Medical Examiners*

## Members of the Board

**Jean Rawlings Sumner, M.D.**  
*President*  
Wrightsville

**Eddie R. Cheeks, M.D.**  
*Immediate Past President*  
Augusta

**Roland S. Summers, M.D.**  
*Past President*  
Savannah

**Richard L. Weil, M.D.**  
*Member*  
Atlanta

**Charles L. White, D.O.**  
*Member*  
Cleveland

**Alexander S. Gross, M.D.**  
*Member*  
Atlanta

**Marion O. Lee, M.D.**  
*Member*  
Cordele

**John T. "Ted" Perry, M.D.**  
*Vice President*  
White

**M. Vinayak Kamath, M.D.**  
*Past President*  
Augusta

**W. Alan Woolery, D.O., Ph.D.**  
*Past President*  
Warner Robins

**William J. Butler, M.D.**  
*Member*  
Macon

**William E. Roundtree, M.D.**  
*Member*  
Columbus

**Kathleen "Kathy" Kinlaw**  
*Consumer Member*  
Decatur

**Kathy Kemle, PA-C**  
*Ex-Officio Member*  
Thomasville

# The Composite State Board of Medical Examiners: Serving Georgia Since 1913

The Georgia Medical Board was created by an act of the General Assembly of Georgia in 1913. Prior to 1913, licensing of medical doctors in Georgia had been achieved through laws originally codified in 1822 and 1826. The 1913 law was passed at the urging of the Medical Association of Georgia, which recommended the establishment of a Board of Medical Examiners at its 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Session in 1910. The original bill called for a board of nine physicians, appointed by the Governor, to license physicians and to regulate and supervise the practice of medicine in Georgia.

Today, the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners, made up of twelve physicians and a consumer member and supported by a staff of 30 dedicated employees and consultants, 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's Assistants	Physician Residents in Training
Respiratory Care Professionals	Acupuncturists
Orthotists and Prosthetists	Clinical Perfusionists

The Board would not be successful were it not for the tireless efforts of the advisory members who serve the people of Georgia. 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.

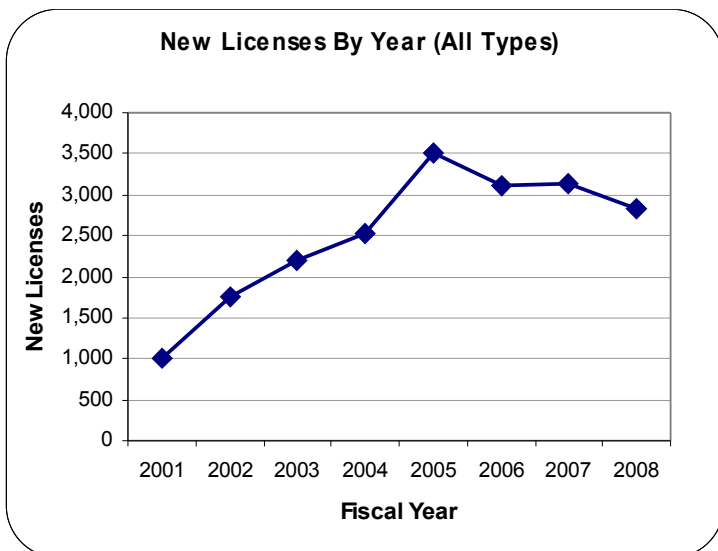
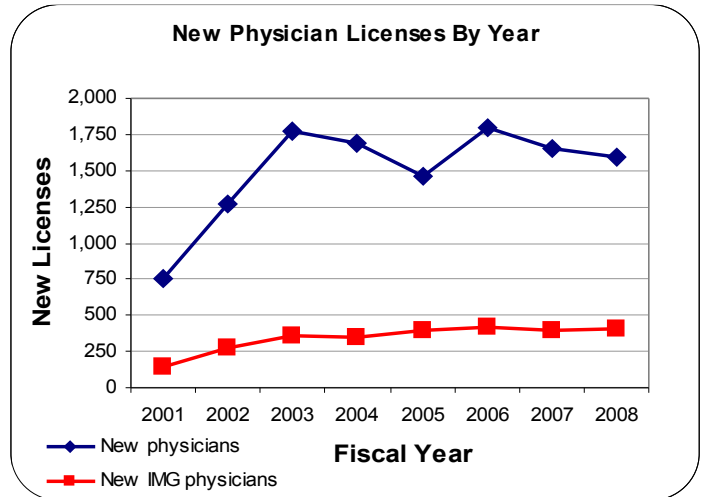
## Licensing

Profession	Active Licenses	New Licenses issued in FY08
Physician	28,839	1,594
Respiratory Care Professional	4,736	354
Physician's Assistant	2,579	270
Physician Resident	1,594	546
Acupuncturist	173	18
Perfusionist	122	9
Orthotist / Prosthetist	206	43
<b>ALL LICENSES</b>	<b>38,249</b>	<b>2,834</b>

Active licenses by profession on November 18, 2008. Physician includes physicians holding Institutional Physician, Provisional Physician, and Volunteer in Medicine licenses. Orthotist / Prosthetist includes professionals holding Orthotist, Prosthetist, and Orthotist & Prosthetist licenses.

Through the licensure process, CSBME 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 CSBME to ensure that each licensee continues to meet current training, continuing education, and professional conduct standards.

CSBME regulates and licenses twelve professions with a combined total of 38,249 actively-licensed practitioners. During FY 2008, the CSBME Licensure Unit issued 1,594 new physician licenses, an increase of 111% over FY 2001. Of these, 25% were international medical graduates, a 21% increase over FY 2001. Including all types of licenses, the Licensure Unit issued 2,822 licenses, an increase of 182% over FY 2001. Balanced against the fact that Georgia's state population has grown by an estimated 18.3% from 2000 to 2008, these data show that Georgia remains an attractive state for the healthcare professionals our citizens need.

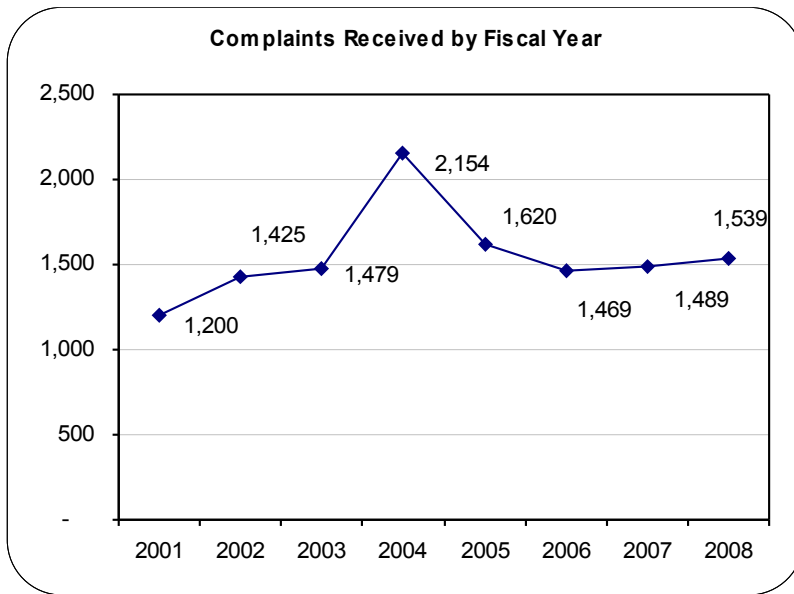


## Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Protocols

In 2007, the Georgia General Assembly enacted a law allowing advanced practice registered nurses the right to prescribe drugs, including certain controlled substances, and mandating the Medical Board to review each physician/nurse protocol to ensure that the standards of medicine were being maintained. These protocols were examined by a committee of physician board members and advanced practice registered nurses. As of December 4, 2008, the committee had accepted 1,146 nurse protocols, of which 1,031 were still in effect, thereby further enhancing Georgians' access to vital healthcare services.

## Enforcement & Investigations

The Board's responsibility extends beyond the licensing of physicians and other health care providers. CSBME 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).

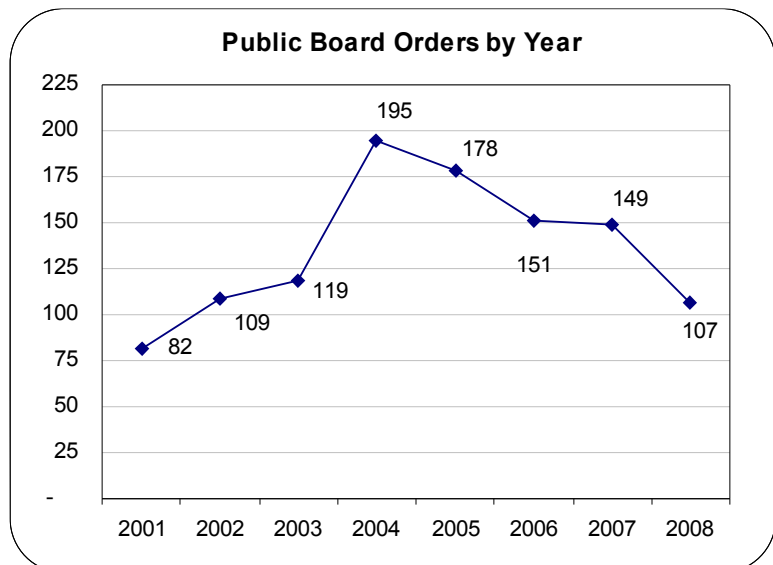


CSBME provides a variety of avenues for ensuring that its licensees are practicing ethically and professionally within the guidelines of the law. The CSBME website, [www.medicalboard.georgia.gov](http://www.medicalboard.georgia.gov), contains the laws and rules practitioners must follow and includes information and forms for filing complaints about illegal, unethical, or unprofessional practice. CSBME 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.

Once a complaint is received, CSBME 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 2008, CSBME received 1,539 complaints against its licensees, an increase of 3.4 percent over the preceding year, and a decrease of 28.6 percent over the peak year of FY 2004. During FY 2008, the Board took 107 public disciplinary actions, ranging from fines, orders for additional medical training or education, and up to license revocation.

When CSBME 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. CSBME Investigations, a

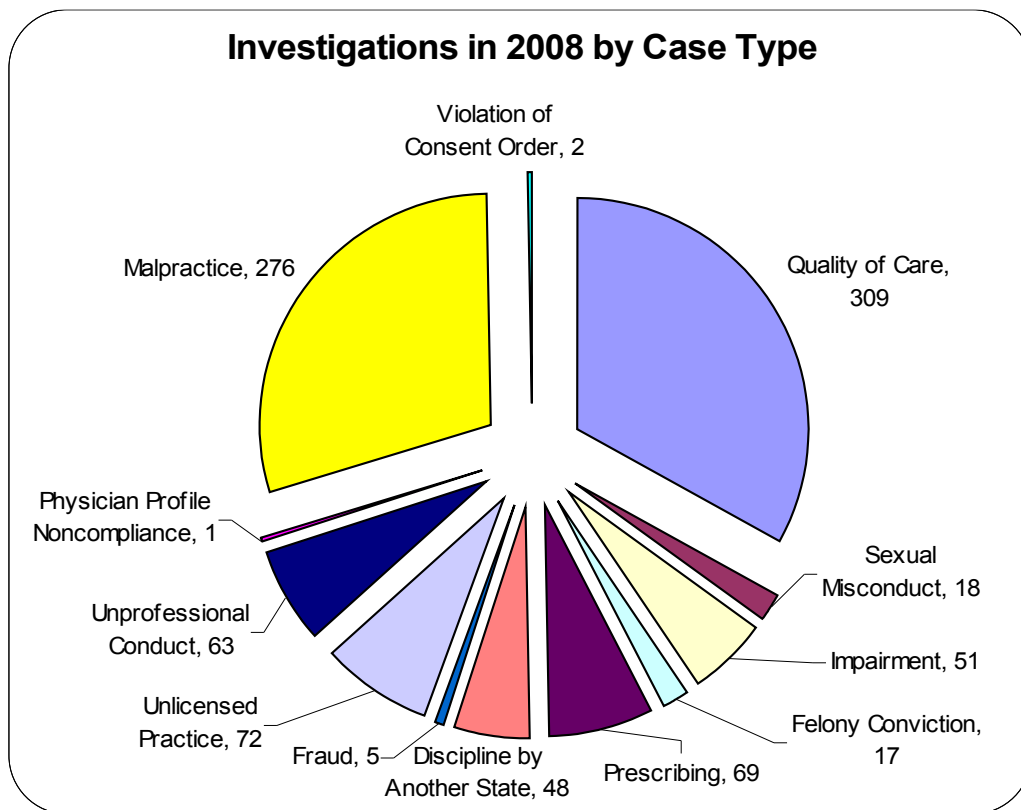


certified law enforcement unit, helps the Board ensure that disciplinary actions are taken only after thorough investigation of the allegations.

During FY 2008, CSBME agents received 931 cases for investigation. Of these, malpractice and quality of care cases accounted for 30 and 33 percent of the total intake, respectively.

CSBME agents completed 887 investigations during the year. At year-end, there were a total of 127 active investigations. Of these active cases, 85 percent had been received in the preceding ninety days.

The efficiency gains CSBME saw in FY 2007 in the quality of investigations, measured by the number of cases returned for further investigation, continued in FY 2008. In FY 2007, we reported that this number fell from 4.76% of total investigations completed in FY 2006 to 2.63% of total investigations completed in FY 2007. This represented an impressive 41.5 percent reduction in the unit's "re-work" rate. In FY 2008, the number fell again, to 2.36% of total investigations completed in FY 2008, raising the bar yet again.



# Protecting the Public, Serving Professionals, 24 Hours a Day: [www.medicalboard.georgia.gov](http://www.medicalboard.georgia.gov)

The general public, professional licensees, healthcare organizations, and other entities need the services the Board provides. With a website praised by Public Citizen for its ease of use as well as the breadth of information it provides. Using our website, 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



## Board Goals and Initiatives: Our Report Card

In last year's annual report, CSBME identified five goals and initiatives for the future that provided a road map to assist the agency in allocating its resources to the most important activities. The Board had significant success in achieving its goals. These goals and initiatives included:

- **The Board will proactively provide education to health care providers and consumers of the valuable resources CSBME offers.**
  - During FY 2008, the Board's members and staff provided presentations to several Georgia customer groups, including Georgia Association of Medical Staff Services (GAMSS), the Georgia Nursing Association (GNA), county medical societies across the state, several hospital organizations, and Georgia medical schools.
- **The Board will continue to work with the American Cancer Society, Pharmacy Board, Georgia Drugs and Narcotics, and the General Assembly to develop and implement new pain management guidelines to help physicians make informed choices about prescribing opioid drugs.**
  - During FY 2008, the Board's executive director worked closely with members of the State Legislature, the American Cancer Society, and stakeholders from across Georgia to improve the Board's pain policy. These efforts raised the state's pain policy grade from D+ to B, an unprecedented one-year improvement.
- **The Board, having learned a valuable lesson from the experience of the Louisiana Medical Board during Hurricane Katrina, will update its disaster and business continuity plans to keep its operational capabilities during a disaster.**
  - During FY 2008, the Board's management team updated its disaster and business continuity plans to more comprehensively address the scenarios that could interrupt our services to the people of Georgia. During FY 2009, the Board will continue to refine these plans, as well as its capabilities and resources that may be needed in disaster situations.
- **The Board will continue to work with the General Assembly and the Governor's Healthy Georgia initiatives to improve the quality of accessible health care in our state.**
  - During FY 2008, the Board worked collaboratively with the nurse practitioner community to implement the protocol reviews required by the 2007 nurse prescribing law, thereby improving the quality of accessible health care, especially in rural and underserved areas, of our state.
- **The Board will implement its e-government initiative that includes online license applications and the filing of online complaints.**
  - The Board's new e-government application has greatly enhanced the Board's accessibility to healthcare consumers and practitioners, resulting in a level of service, convenience, and efficiency that stands at the forefront of the nation's medical boards
- **The Board, recognizing that healthcare is a changing, demanding profession, will work collaboratively with other professions, the General Assembly, and our stakeholders to improve quality and continuity of care for all Georgians. (New goal for FY 2009)**

## Our Staff

Our people are at the heart of our accomplishments. CSBME 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 CSBME to protect the health of Georgians through our licensing and enforcement activities. They include:

**LaSharn Hughes, MBA**  
*Executive Director*

**Robert Jeffery, MBA**  
*Director of Operations*

**Betsy D. Cohen, Esq.**  
*Staff Attorney*

**Diane Atkinson**  
*Administrative Assistant  
to the Executive Director*

**Phyllis White**  
*Operations Analyst*

**Idrisa Smith**  
*Licensing Manager*

**Gladys Henderson**  
*Physician Licensure*

**Shonda Roberts**  
*Physician Licensure*

**Carol Dorsey**  
*Acupuncture Licensure and  
Nurse Protocol Review*

**Phyllis Perry**  
*Enforcement Unit*

**Franchesca Virgil**  
*Enforcement Unit*

**Adrienne Baker**  
*Medical Board Agent, Principal*

**Lem Roberts**  
*Medical Board Agent, Senior*

**Emmalie Kirkland**  
*Medical Board Agent, Senior*

**Marion Walls**  
*Medical Board Agent, Senior*

**Katonya Reynolds**  
*Information and Referral Specialist*

**Jim H. McNatt, M.D., MBA**  
*Medical Director*

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

**Peter Ciejek, M.D.**  
*Medical Consultant*

**Surender Kumar, M.D.**  
*Medical Consultant*

**Jeriste Dorsey**  
*Financial Administrator*

**Jean Rice**  
*Systems Administrator*

**Deborah Bruce**  
*Physician Licensure*

**Lynette Riddle**  
*Physician's Assistant Licensure*

**Mary Harris**  
*RCP, Perfusionist, and  
Orthotist & Prosthetist Licensure*

**Nancy Teele, M.S.**  
*Enforcement Unit Supervisor*

**Sharon Cloud**  
*Enforcement Unit*

**Steve Wills**  
*Medical Board Agent, Senior*

**Charles Kingsland**  
*Medical Board Agent, Senior*

**Stephanie Cleary**  
*Medical Board Agent, Senior*

**Elizabeth Beavers**  
*Compliance Manager*

## **FY 2008 Revenue and Expenditures: An Outstanding Value to Georgia**

### **Revenue:**

Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriation	\$ 2,366,731
Application, Renewal, and other License Fees	\$ 3,792,578
Other Income	\$ 303,918

**Total Revenues** **\$ 6,463,227**

### **Expenditures:**

Personal Services	\$ 1,857,222
General Operating	\$ 153,860
Investigative & Related	\$ 117,481
Travel	\$ 36,315
Voice, Data, & Information Systems	\$ 93,270
Rent	\$ 40,000

**Total Expenditures** **\$ 2,298,148**

**Net Contribution to State Treasury:** **\$ 4,165,079**