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MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL LICENSURE

KENNETH E. CLEVELAND, M.D. | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 16, 2020


RE: The Use of Certain Titles Associated with the Practice of Medicine by Non-Licensees

Since approximately 2200 BC, physicians have practiced the profession now known officially as the Practice of Medicine. Since that time, the term 'physician', both colloquially and as a matter of law, has always indicated that the person carrying that title is a person duly qualified, educated, and licensed to practice medicine.

Recently, the Board has been made aware of certain individuals, often times practicing a licensed profession outside of medicine, who insert the term 'physician' after their earned title or licensure type. The Mississippi State Board of Medical Licensure (the Board) considers the use of the term 'physician', or any other professional title directly related to the practice of medicine – such as those enumerated by The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), by individuals who have not completed medical school, to be a violation of the Patient's Right to Informed Health Care Choices Act¹. Further, the Board considers any practice conducted while utilizing said title(s) to be the illegal and unlicensed practice of medicine.

Miss. Code Ann., §73-25-1, states the following, in part: "*Every person who desires to practice medicine must first obtain a license to do so from the State Board of Medical Licensure . . .*" Patients have a right to know, without any doubt, what type of practitioner they are seeing, and this knowledge should not be impeded by innuendo or overt falsehood by the provider – suggesting they are duly licensed to practice medicine when, in fact, they are not.

So Declared by Order of the Board, this the 16th day of January, 2020.


Jeanne Ann Rea, M.D.
Board President
Mississippi State Board of Medical Licensure

¹ Miss. Code Ann., § 41-121-1, *et seq*