

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

NEWSLETTER



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FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear licensees and stakeholders:

As temperatures rise, we hope you are managing to stay comfortable and safe.

The legislative session involved more bills than usual that affect the board and its licensees. A legislative update describing all of this activity begins on page 4. In particular, please note the requirement in Act 649 requiring patient consent to use any device that uses AI to record your interaction for subsequent use. You will hear more from us on this issue in another communication.

The Health Professionals Foundation of Louisiana (HPFL) has a new medical director; he is introduced to you on page 6. Speaking of the HPFL, we want to make sure that any of our licensees who are dealing with mental health or addiction issues make sure to reach out to us in confidence before obtaining an evaluation from a health provider. Licensees participating in a Board monitoring program must obtain evaluations and treatment **only from facilities approved by the LSBME and HPFL**. Evaluations, assessments, and treatment obtained from non-approved providers may not satisfy Board requirements and may require additional time and expense for another evaluation. We do not want you to have to repeat the process, spending valuable time and money, because you did not go to an approved provider. Please click [here](#) for more information.

While our time to license from submission is averaging 20 days for most of our practitioner groups, some changes are coming that will make new applications and renewals even speedier. Stay tuned for further announcements on this subject as new systems are brought online in our licensing department.

As always, if you have suggestions or comments to anything you see in this newsletter, please write to us at lsbme@lsbme.la.gov, or education@lsbme.la.gov.

Best regards,

Vincent A. Culotta, Jr.

PUBLIC BOARD ACTIONS, APRIL 2026 - JUNE 2026

Below is a list of all licensees who were subject to a public board action, April - June 2026. (Board actions include notices of summary suspension, reprimands, probation, conditions, reinstatements, voluntary surrenders, etc.)

For further details on each of these disciplinary actions, please go to our [disciplinary actions webpage](#) and click on the additional documents pertaining to the named licensee.

[**Shiva Kumar Akila, MD**](#) - Consent order for suspension of medical license, 06/22/2026.

[**Crystel Leah Babb, LRT**](#) - Consent order for indefinite suspension of respiratory therapy license, 04/27/2026.

[**Antonio Felipe Belda, MD**](#) - Stipulation and agreement for voluntary surrender of medical license, 05/18/2026.

[**Johnathan Chadwick Cole, DO**](#) - Consent order for indefinite suspension of medical license, 5/18/2026.

[**Joel Bremer Durinka, MD**](#) - Notice of suspension of IMLC medical license, 04/27/2026.

[**John Henry Fairbanks, MD**](#) - Consent order for reprimand of medical license, 04/27/2026.

[**Robin Kathleen Ford, DO**](#) - Notice of summary suspension of medical license, 04/16/2026.

[**Quang Kim Huynh, LAC**](#) - Order for reinstatement of unrestricted acupuncture license, 06/22/2026.

[**Ashik Joshi, MD**](#) - Consent order for reinstatement of medical license, 05/18/2026.

[**Carissa Nicole Keir, CPM**](#) - Consent order for probation of midwifery license, 4/27/2026.

[**Christie Diane Kimball, MD**](#) - Consent order for reprimand of medical license, 5/18/2026.

[**Garbriel Perez Lasala, MD**](#) - Consent order for reinstatement of unrestricted medical license, 4/27/2026.

[**Carrie Elise Patterson, OT**](#) - Reinstatement of occupational therapy license on probation, 4/27/2026.

[**Brandon L. Raynes, LRT**](#) - Consent order for suspension of respiratory therapy license, 05/18/2026.

[**Elyse Sparks Stevens, MD**](#) - Consent order for reprimand and probation of medical license, 06/22/2026.

[Patrick DeCourcy Walker, MD](#) - Consent order for probation of medical license, 4/27/2026.

[Shatamia Juaniece Webb, CPM](#) - Consent order for reprimand of midwifery license, 06/22/2026.

New and Departing Board Members

In the last few months, the board has welcomed 2 new members, Dr. Leonel Lacayo and Mrs. Noelle Montgomery, our public/consumer member. They are replacing, respectively, Dr. Patrick O'Neill and Ms. Kim Sport. The board wishes to thank Dr. O'Neill and Ms. Sport for their years of service to the Louisiana public and for their expertise.



Dr. Leonel Lacayo is a board-certified Gastroenterologist who joined the board in January of this year. Originally from Nicaragua, he received his undergraduate degree from LSU in Biology (premed), and his M.D. from Tulane School of Medicine in 1989. He completed his Internal Medicine Residency at Miami in 1992, and a fellowship in Gastroenterology at Emory in 1994. In the last ten years he has served in various academic positions at the VA in New Orleans, first as Department Chief 2006-2009, and more recently as part-time staff. He is married with 3 children and 13 grandchildren.



Noelle Montgomery is the board's newest consumer (non-physician) member. She graduated from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. After college she began her career in retail by opening a boutique, later purchasing a larger building to accommodate her growing business. After 13 successful years she closed boutique and sold the building. Over the next several years, Noelle worked with business owners to improve efficiency and profitability by implementing organizational structures, effective point-of-sale systems, and strategic marketing initiatives. Combining her passion for business and design, she later earned her real estate license and began assisting clients in buying/selling homes and design projects while also renovating and designing her own homes. As a mother of four, Mrs. Montgomery's interest in the medical field began when her oldest daughter was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis at just three weeks old. For the past 22 years, she has gained firsthand experience navigating many aspects of the healthcare system while advocating for her daughter.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - 2026 REGULAR LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Many laws enacted or amended in the 2026 Regular Legislative Session are of particular interest to the LSBME and its licensees. **Unless otherwise specified, all of these Acts become effective August 1, 2026.**

ACT 119 (HB98 by Rep. Johnson) Penalizes the disclosure of confidential information relating to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Amends current law to provide a penalty consisting of imprisonment with or without hard labor for not more than one year, a fine of not more than \$2,500, or both for any person who intentionally releases, discloses, transfers, or disseminates for publication any information related to the abuse status of an applicant or insured for any purpose not provided in law.

ACT 550 (HB405 by Rep. Egan) changes the certifying organization's name from the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine to the National Certification Board for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine.

ACT 965 (HB410 by Rep. Schlegel) Requires disclosure to all parties that a direct, in-person conversation is being recorded under circumstances in which a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy.

ACT 649 (HB475 by Rep. Berault) Requires a healthcare professional to disclose to a patient the use of a recording device, software, or service to transcribe using artificial intelligence during an appointment or treatment.

ACT 558 (HB609 by Rep. Chassion) Provides for the one-time exemption of fees for health records when veterans are seeking disability benefits administered by the federal and state veteran's affairs departments and that healthcare providers may require reasonable documentation to establish veteran status.

ACT 312 (HB676 by Rep. Spell) Creates the crime of fraudulent patient referrals or "body brokering." **(Effective 05/22/2026.)**

ACT 174 (HB747 Rep. Miller) Replaces the certification for advanced practice of medical psychology with a license for the advanced practice of medical psychology.

ACT 855 (HB761 by Rep. Hilferty) Revises the composition of the advisory board for rare cancer treatments and provides for meetings and reporting requirements.

ACT 833 (HB766 by Rep. Freeman) Establishes updated requirements governing health insurance coverage for orally administered anti-cancer medications.

ACT 835 (HB775) by Rep. Chenevert) Requires informed written parental consent for the provision or performance of certain medical procedures or services to minors.

ACT 567 (HB779 by Rep. Freeman) Authorizes the La. Dept. of Health to provide for sexually associated infections that may be treated with expedited partner therapy.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, cont.

ACT 852(HB895 by Rep. Boyd) Requires a healthcare provider to provide emergency contraception and HIV and STI post-exposure prophylaxis to all survivors of sexual assault.

ACT 183 (HB907 by Rep. Miller) Provides for civil and criminal immunity for the distribution or use of opioid antagonists beyond their shelf-life end dates and prohibits disciplinary actions by professional licensing boards for healthcare professionals granted civil and criminal immunity.

ACT 855 (HB944 by Rep. Hilferty) Creates the Louisiana Women's Health Consortium.

ACT 867 (HB1049 by Rep. Owen) Provides for the posting of a meeting notice, for the contents of meeting minutes, for draft minutes, and requires the presence of legal counsel or a member who is trained in open meetings law at a meeting of a public body.

ACT 879 (HB1160 by Rep. Echols) Creates a restricted rural physician license for international medical graduates who meet certain requirements.

ACT 933 (HB1182 by Rep. Egan) Provides relative to the governing rules for Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants as it pertains to their licensure and fees.

ACT 232 (SB26 by Sen. McMath) Repeals law requiring the La. Dept. of Health to utilize facility need review to determine the need for new or additional opioid treatment programs licensed under a behavioral health services provider license. **(Effective 05/15/2026.)**

ACT 345 (SB30 by Sen. McMath) Prohibits licensing boards of medical professionals from creating rules that prohibit medical professionals from evaluating, diagnosing or treating patients for obesity or weight management via telehealth if the professionals are within their scope of practice, if the visits use synchronous technology, and the treatment is within the applicable standard of care.

ACT 956 (SB43 by Sen. McMath) Establishes the Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy Initiative within the La. Department of Health and provides for clinical studies, clinical trial enabling studies and drug development clinical trials, including patient eligibility, reporting, and related matters.

ACT 367 (SB 216 by Sen. Wheat) Provides that the medical pronouncement of death by a coroner may also be based on personal observation, information, or statements obtained from practical nurses in addition to other healthcare professionals.

HPFL Announces New Medical Director

The Healthcare Professionals' Foundation of Louisiana (HPFL) recently announced that Dr. Jay Piland, MD, will serve as its new medical director. Dr. Piland obtained his medical degree from Texas Tech University in 1994. He was board certified in internal medicine after completing his residency at Ochsner Medical Foundation in New Orleans in 1997. He attained board certification in Addiction Medicine in 2009. For the last 30 years he has worked in residential facilities, outpatient programs, and inpatient units throughout Louisiana.

Dr. Piland practiced internal medicine in Alexandria, Louisiana from 1997 through 2015, and collaborated with Palmetto Addiction Recovery Center from 2014 through 2017. That position began his focus on the professional population with substance use disorders; he also worked with adolescents and at-risk groups at Pecan Haven. He returned to Alexandria in 2017 to become the medical director of addiction services at Longleaf Behavioral Hospital from 2017 through 2026. Dr. Piland has also served as the medical director of the Baton Rouge Comprehensive Treatment Center since 2021, focusing on opioid use disorder treatment in the general population, and also Chief Medical Officer of the Professional's Wellness Evaluation Center in Alexandria since 2017—centered on the education and evaluation of safety-sensitive individuals. He is passionate about recovery and is grateful for the opportunity to continue his work with healthcare professionals.

Dr. Piland believes the wellness of the professional population can be restored when individuals are engaged with professional treatment and thorough monitoring. He feels that the professional population deserves advocacy, honesty, and compassion while ensuring that impaired professionals are given the resources and accountability needed to be successful. Dr. Piland believes in the HPFL's goal of helping impaired providers, and he aims to enshrine positivity and collaboration into every aspect of the HPFL.

In other news, long-term administrative director Felix Vanderlick now serves as the executive director.

The HPFL can be reached at (888) 743-5747 or (225) 291-5000

Advisory Committee Updates

Since the last newsletter, the advisory committees for Clinical Laboratory Personnel, Medical Psychologists, Occupational Therapy, and Respiratory Care all had meetings. To see the agendas and recorded live streams of past meetings, as well as information on upcoming meetings please go to our [Advisory Committees webpage](#).

A MESSAGE ON BURNOUT FROM JAY PILAND, MD, HPFL MEDICAL DIRECTOR

The health care environment is a crucible fueled by demanding schedules, time sensitive decision making, emotional intensity, and unrelenting scrutiny. The industrial forces within medicine put healthcare providers, especially physicians, at high risk of burnout and potentially, subsequent impairment. Physician burnout is a work-related syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (becoming detached, negative, or less empathetic toward patients), and reduced sense of personal accomplishment.¹

In 2025, 42% of physicians reported experiencing at least one symptom of burnout, down from 43% in 2024 and 48% in 2023, drops since peaking during the COVID era.² However, physician burnout rates remain disproportionately higher than the incident rates of burnout in other professions. The commonly identified causes of burnout include excessive workloads, lengthy shifts, variable work hours, continuous documentation burdens, non-clinical administrative tasks, loss of sense of autonomy, staffing shortages, poor work-life balance, and moral injury due to being unable to provide ideal care because of systematic constraints. The signs and symptoms of burnout include chronic fatigue, irritability, emotional numbness, decreased empathy/compassion, reduced job satisfaction, difficulty concentrating, and sleep disturbances; these stressors directly lead to an increased risk of impairment.

Physician burnout affects both physicians and patients with associated increase in medical errors, lower patient satisfaction, higher physician turnover, early retirement, and reduced access to care in communities already facing workforce shortages. There are numerous evidence-based strategies to combat physician burnout involving two domains: Individual and Organizational (most effective). The individual strategies are mindfulness, stress-management training, prioritizing wellness with sleep/exercise/recovery time, strengthening social and professional support networks, and seeking therapeutic resources when needed. Experts increasingly emphasize that burnout is primarily a systems problem rather than a personal resilience problem.³ Noted organizational evidence-based strategies include reducing documentation burdens, improving staffing ratios, increased physician autonomy, workflow streamlining, and supportive leadership and workplace cultures.⁴

As a physician, if you are experiencing burnout symptoms such as emotional exhaustion, loss of meaning in work, dread of clinic/hospital days, or feeling detached from patients, please ask for help as these are warning signs of burnout and worth addressing early. Burnout, if not addressed, can result in impairment, requiring a higher level of care to remediate. The Healthcare Professionals' Foundation is readily available to assist with cases involving burnout or more serious impairment; we can help identify therapists, support groups, professional treatment pathways, and peer-to-peer communications. If you, a peer, or a loved one need assistance, intervention can save careers, reputations, and lives.

¹ West CP, Dyrbye LN, Shanafelt TD. (Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN; and Stanford University Medical Center, Stanford, CA, USA). Physician burnout: contributors, consequences and solutions (Review). *J Intern Med* 2018; 283: 516–529.

² Berg, S. 2026. National physician burnout survey. American Medical Association. <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/physician-health/national-physician-burnout-survey>

³ Nathalia, M. (2026, February 18). Burnout Isn't a Resilience Problem. It's a System Design Signal. LinkedIn, 2026. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/burnout-isnt-resilience-problem-its-system-design-signal-drueco-cpinc/>

⁴ Gray, M. (2026, February 19). Reducing EHR documentation burden: Evidence-based strategies that actually work (2026). EHR Source. <https://www.ehrsource.com/articles/reducing-ehr-documentation-burden/>

Did You Know... About the Duty to Self-report?

Under Louisiana Law, a physician has the duty to self-report, in writing to the Board within 30 days, any arrests or other personal actions that may constitute a violation of the Louisiana Medical Practice Act. Failure to self-report may itself be considered an individual basis for discipline, separate from the underlying arrest or conduct. The board may refuse to issue, or may suspend or revoke any license or permit, or impose probationary or other restrictions on any license, permit, or certificate issued if the physician fails to report.⁵

Similarly, the Louisiana Health Care Professionals Reporting Act requires a health care entity to submit a written report to the appropriate professional licensing board within 72 hours of each instance in which it: (1) takes adverse action against a health care professional due to impairment or possible impairment; or (2) accepts the surrender of clinical privileges, the resignation of employment or a contractual relationship, or the withdrawal from participation in a health care training program of or by a health care professional: (a) while the health care professional is under investigation by the entity for impairment or possible impairment; or (b) in return for not conducting an investigation.⁶

When applying for both an initial license or a renewal, all applicants, not just physicians, are asked if they have ever been arrested for, convicted of, or pled guilty to a violation of municipal, state or federal law. An applicant must select "yes" even if charges are dropped, never materialized, or you were found innocent. There is no duty to report any misdemeanor traffic offenses or violations unless they involve alcohol or drugs. All "yes" answers must be accompanied by a sworn affidavit. A sworn affidavit is an explanation in applicant's own words that must be typed and affirmed under penalty of perjury. If criminal history is found that was not disclosed, an applicant will be required to submit a new Oath or Affirmation, a new affidavit as to why he or she did not disclose the information and a new processing fee equal to the initial licensure fee. It is important that all questions are answered accurately and truthfully.

However, a report shall not be required if the violation relates to a physician's ability to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety by reason of substance abuse or psychiatric condition, provided such physician has, since the occurrence, executed a treatment contract with the Healthcare Professionals Foundation of Louisiana (HPFL) and is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of such contract. The HPFL's Professional's Health Program's primary role is to aid health care professionals, such as physicians, physician assistants, podiatrists, and medical psychologists, who may be suffering from difficulties such as substance use issues, depression, anxiety, etc., in addition to a host of physical ailments and disruptive behavior patterns. This assistance by the HPFL is confidential. Please note that private treatment outside of coordination with the HPFL does not exempt physicians from the reporting requirement and may not avail physicians to the benefits and protections offered by the HPFL.

To self-report, a physician can email investigations at investigations@lsbme.la.gov .

⁵ La. R.S. 37:125(A)(31).

⁶ La. R.S. 37:1745.14.

SCAM ALERT!!

Once again, we implore our licensees to be wary of anyone contacting you allegedly from the LSBME, whether it is by phone, fax, text or email, and urging you to part with sums of money on an urgent basis! We have recently heard of more health practitioners receiving phony calls that looked like they were originating from our main number, (504) 568-6820. As you probably know by now, that is called "spoofing" and it is unfortunately increasingly common. If you receive a communication from us saying that you are being investigated, and must do something IMMEDIATELY to preserve your license, it is a scam. If you are told not to mention your investigation to anyone, it is a scam. If you receive such a call, please hang up, call our main number and ask to speak to someone in the Investigations department. You can call our number with complete confidence that a legitimate board employee will answer and direct your call appropriately. Sadly, receiving a call from what seems to be from our main number does not necessarily mean it is the Board calling. If you are the subject of an investigation, you may receive a call, but any requests from us regarding more information will come in writing, and there will not be any financial requests unless you have a negotiated consent order or hearing after due process has been followed.

Licensee Responsibility to Keep Contact Information Up to Date

All licensees should be aware that if you change your address or your email address, it is YOUR responsibility to log on to the LaMED Dashboard at <https://online.lasbme.org/#/> and make the change to your record. (You may also go to the home page at www.lsbme.la.gov and click on LaMED Dashboard) Board staff cannot do this for you. To make sure that emails and communication by regular mail are reaching you, please make a point of changing your contact information as necessary. **Please make sure that the mailing/user email field contains the email that you see and read, and that it does not go to the office manager or other personnel.** Do not share your password for your LaMED Dashboard account; this is for **your** private use only.

The accounting department would like to advise licensees that accounts with overdue monitoring fees or fines (past 90 days) will be escalated to the Attorney General's Office for collection. Licensees are liable for all associated collection costs.

NEW RETIRED/VOLUNTEER PHYSICIAN LICENSE FOR PHYSICIANS 70+ YEARS OF AGE

Recently the board began issuing a new type of license to physicians 70 years of age and older, who still wish to practice and prescribe on a limited, volunteer basis. This license is half the cost of a regular unrestricted physician license. The CME requirements for this license are also one half that of a regular license: 10 hours annually.

A physician may opt for a "Retired Physician - Volunteer" status if the physician holds an unrestricted license to practice medicine issued by the board, is 70 years of age or older, and attests that he or she will limit his or her practice to volunteer services without payment, pecuniary gain, compensation, or remuneration of any kind. The physician must agree to limit his or her practice to:

1. providing services to family or personal acquaintances;
2. providing services at volunteer or charity clinics for no more than 20 hours per week, or
3. providing services through a foreign volunteer or charity medical mission program.

This license differs from the retired reduced fee (honorary) license the board has had for many years, which does not permit the holder to prescribe legend drugs nor practice in any way.

Practitioners who wish to obtain this retired/volunteer physician license must apply online via their LaMED portals and must attest to various conditions. Once granted, subsequent renewals are similar to the renewals process for the standard physician license. Physicians may apply for this license at any time once they are 70 years of age or older; this does not have to occur in the regular renewal month.

Physicians who meet the requirements and are interested in learning more about this licensure type should contact licensing@lsbme.la.gov.

Questions/Comments? Something you'd like to see in the Newsletter? Email: Education@lsbme.la.gov

REMINDERS FOR NEW LICENSEES

New licensees should be aware of certain CME/CE requirements you must fulfill before your first renewal, as well as your ongoing required hours for subsequent renewals. You must set up an account on our electronic education tracker, CE Broker, if you have not already done so. **All coursework to meet your required hours (or for physician assistants your NCCPA certificate of compliance) must be posted on your transcript in CE Broker or you will be unable to renew your license.**

New licensees must take a Laws and Rules course on your profession before you renew for the first time, except for Clinical Exercise Physiologists and Perfusionists. You can find links to these courses on our [Continuing Education](#) page. Or you can search for them on CE Broker under the LSBME as the provider.

Those licensees who prescribe controlled substances (Physicians, Physician Assistants, Podiatrists and Medical Psychologists) have a one-time requirement per Act 76-2017 to take the **Board-Approved** course on the prescribing of Controlled Dangerous Substances (CDS) offered by Medical Interactive. Please access the course through our website. Click [here](#) for more information, or go to <https://medicalinteractive.com/lsbme> to enroll in the course. The course is free to all prescribers. If you are not prescribing CDS in Louisiana, you may fill out an exemption form on that page, send it to cdscme@lsbme.la.gov for approval.

If you are a prescriber who filled out an exemption request form for this requirement because you were not prescribing CDS at the time but whose practice has changed, you are required to take the course. **Prescribers are also reminded that this requirement is for the prescribing of ALL CDS, not just opioids or schedule 2 drugs.**

How to create a free CE Broker account

1. Go to <https://cebroker.com/la/accout/basic/>
2. Enter your License number exactly as it appears on your license, "123456".
3. Once you have an account, you can upload your CE or CME certificates.
4. The courses of some content providers who are registered with CE Broker will upload automatically.
5. Any Laws and Rules course taken on CE Broker will upload automatically and instantly to the transcript.
6. You can also download the CE Broker app on your smartphone and use the camera to take pictures of certificates, if that is easier.
7. CE Broker will track that you have met your requirements for your first renewal, or for yearly compliance with CE/CME with the NCCPA for PAs.